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THE

MARTYRS, HEROES, AND BARDS

OF THE

SCOTTISH COVENANT.

By GEORGE GILFILLAN, M.A.

——— "They of old, whose tempered blades
Dispersed the shackles of usurped control,
And hewed them link from link,—then Britain's sons
Were sons indeed; they felt a filial heart
Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs;
And, shining each in his domestic sphere,
Shone brighter still when call'd to public view."
COWPER.

"Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind."
BYRON.

THIRD THOUSAND.

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THE purpose of this volume is to present a succinct and impartial account of the history of the Scottish Covenant, an unbiassed estimate of the character of its principal actors, and some general deductions applicable to the great question of the present day. The author has not named his authorities at the foot of the page; but he acknowledges special obligations to the younger MacRie's Sketches of Scottish Church History, to MacGavin's edition of The Scottish Worthies, to "The Bass-Rock," and to Simpson's Traditions of the Covenanters.

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THE MARTYRS, HEROES, AND BARDS

OF THE

SCOTTISH COVENANT.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

PRINCIPLES ON WHICH HISTORY SHOULD BE WRITTEN.

THE book now commenced is not, strictly and logically speaking, a history. It is intended, however, to include in a series of chapters an outline of the story of the Covenanters, as well as an estimate of their character in its merits and demerits. It does not seem, therefore, out of place to commence by a few remarks on the principles and the spirit on and in which history should be written.

The true idea of history is only as yet dawning on the world, and though the "old almanac" form of history has been generally renounced, much of the old almanac spirit remains. The avowed partizan still presumes to write his special pleading, and to call it a history. The romance-writer still decorates his fancy piece, and, for fear of mistake, writes under it, "This is a history." The bald retailer of the dry bones of history is not yet entirely banished from our literature, nor is the hardy but one-sided Iconoclast, who has a quarrel with all established reputation, and would underrate the sun if he durst; nor is the sagacious *philosophiste*, who has access to the inner thoughts and motives of men who have been dead for centuries, and often imputes to deep deliberate purpose,

actions which were the result of momentary impulse, fresh and sudden as the breeze—who accurately sums up, and ably reasons on, all calculable principles, but omits the incalculable, such as inspiration, frenzy, and enthusiasm. The ideal of a historian we have, may perhaps appear too high, and may have the effect of crushing our own little effort under the standard we have ourselves set up; but we are, nevertheless, bound to state it, although the book it prefaces aspires not to the full measure and stature of a history.

The true historian, intellectually and morally, must possess many of the faculties of the epic poet. He must aim at his severe purpose—his cumulative interest—his conjunction of grandeur in the whole with simplicity in the parts—the solemnity of his spirit—the general gravity of his tone—the episodes, in which he gathers up, as in baskets, the fragments of his story—the high argument or moral, less standing up from, than living through, the whole strain—his union of imaginative and intellectual power, and his perspicuity, purity, and clear energy of language. Besides all this, the historian must do the following things: he must be able to live in and reproduce the age of which he writes; he must sympathize with its ruling passions and purposes, without being swallowed up or identified with them; he must understand the points, alike of agreement and of difference, between the past age and his own time; he must exercise a judicial impartiality in determining the deeds, motives, purposes, and pretexts of various parties; he must make the proper degree of allowance—nor more nor less—when judging of dubious or criminal conduct, for diversities of moral codes, national customs and states of progress; he must practise the power of severe selection of facts, looking at them always in their representative character; he must unite broad views of the general current of events, and of the advance of the whole of society, with intense rushing lights, cast upon particular points and pinnacles of his subject; he must have a distinct and valid *theory* of progress; he must map out the under-

currents, as well as the upper streams of his story; he must add a love of the picturesque, the beautiful, and the heroic, to an intense passion for truth; he must give to general principles the incarnate interest of facts, and make facts the graceful symbols of general principles; he must, in fine, be acquainted not only with the philosophy, science, statistics, and poetry, but with the religion of his art, and regard Clio not as a muse, but as a goddess. He must, in other words, not only believe in the prevalence of general laws—of fixed trade-winds of tendency, and steady currents of progress—but in the control, constant superintendence, and all-informing influence of a Divine mind, whose Spirit at once impels and moves in the advancing wheels of society;—not only that

> "—— through the ages an increasing purpose runs,
> And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns;"

but that the "purpose" is that of an intelligent and conscious being, and that the "process" is overruled by a personal and presiding Deity.

All the qualities thus enumerated are worthy of separate enforcement and illustration. But our space confines us to a few. We select first that of judicial impartiality. A judge is the historian of a single day; and a historian should be the judge of centuries. He should anticipate, as it were, the judgment of all ages, and sit down on the tribunal, shorn of all prejudice, prepossession, party, and even, if possible, *human* spirit; passionless as a cherub, and, while sympathizing with man's position and feelings, looking at his motions at an angle in which they assume their true proportions—counters in the great general game of the universe—significant in their insignificance certainly, but as surely in their significance comparatively small. History should be like the shorthand which we can conceive a superior spirit to use in recording his impressions of earthly events, simple, condensed, severe, marking principally the *summa fastigia rerum*, and giving to these nothing more than their just prominence. This severe

selection will not, however, exclude the historian from the walks of the private, personal, and domestic life of his period. Nay, these, so far as they are important and representative, will call for his particular survey, and he will ever recognize the principle that the songs of a country are on a level with its laws, and that more may be learned from the details of village and rural life—from the statistics of city crime, or from the preserved gossip of courts, than from the bulletins of great battles, or from the public life of illustrious conquerors.

Another important requisite in a historian is the power of making proper allowance for the crimes or dubious actions of other ages and countries. There are here two extremes. Some seek to apply one test and measure —that namely of our modern enlightened judgment and christian conscience — to the dark deeds of other days; to transfer, for instance, the shudder with which we now read the unmentionable barbarities which accompanied the death of Algernon Sidney, and many other patriots, entire, into the past, and to deem that had we lived then, we, and all others, should and would have had our present feelings of disgust and horror. This is unphilosophical and ridiculous. It is throwing a light on the picture which it cannot bear. It is giving a false point of view. It is making the barbarism stand out too prominently from the accessories and relief supplied by the barbarous age. We forget the immense stride civilization has taken since; and we forget, also, that custom has reconciled the majority of us to practices, such as the miserable details of a modern execution, which are sure in their turn to awaken the contempt and the loathing of posterity. But there is another extreme — that of making no account at all for the unity and all-pervasive sympathy of the human heart, which existed then as well as now, and which was often then—and even according to the standard of ruder manners—outraged, and *felt* to be so. Our fathers were not mere devouring monsters. In their treatment of each other, fierce though it was, there was a point beyond which if cruelty or any other

vice went, there arose, on all sides, an outcry, and the criminal did in nowise go unpunished. There have been matters of Uriah, as well as mere stormings of Rabbah—murders of the Innocents, as well as deserved destructions of David's personal foes—massacres of Glencoe, and shootings of Ayrshire carriers, as well as rough sieges of Drogheda — events, so vile or so bloody, that universal man has risen and protested against them, lest they should become for ever brands on his brow. And it is the part of a historian sternly and strongly to mark *the point* where allowance and palliation must cease, and where justice is compelled to lift her iron scales. This may be safely left to his own instinct if he be worthy of his calling; farther statement on our part, of the principles which should determine his judgment, might rather hinder than help him.

The historian must unite general breadth with occasional intensity. In his calm and patient narrative of the course of society, and the current of events, he will be sustained by looking forward to certain pinnacles of commanding prospect, and to scenes of profounder interest. When a great battle impends, he will smell it afar-off—the thunder of the captains and the shouting. "How I thirst for Zama," said Arnold, and, like him, the true historian will go on thirsting for Bothwell Bridge, for Lodi, and for Waterloo. When a hero is stepping on the deck of a great conquering emprize, *his* step will echo its thunder. When a nation is angry, up in one of those terrible epidemics of feeling, which shew for a season man in his true character as a whole—like a giant tree filled from trunk to topmost twig with one furious wind — the historian will rise, dilate, and burn beside the awful possession. When the current of his story bears him into some beautiful channel, where natural beauty reflects great events, he will pause and linger fondly—but not too long—in its description, like Livy painting the fair plains of Italy, seen by Hannibal from the Alps — or, like Arnold as he breathes more freely amid the romantic uplands of the Samnite country. When he passes on his way, by

the lintel of the door of neglected genius, or forgotten valour, he will do so uncovered, and with his shoes off his feet. When he comes to speak of the deaths of men who were nations in themselves, his melodious and plaintive eulogy will seem like the homage of the star, fabled sometimes to shine forth when a Cæsar or a Cromwell has departed, and when he describes a pestilence or a reign of blood, passing over a devoted land, he will, in sympathy and bold identification of himself with the spirit of the judgment, appear to

"Ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm."

A passion for truth is not always, or very often, united with a sense of the picturesque and the beautiful. Generally, the power of severe analysis and that of admiration for the concrete are found apart. The one man seeks to reduce each object to its skeleton, and the other clasps the living reality in his arms. Hence a twofold falsehood — the falsehood of those who regard the letter more than the spirit, and that of those who, while seeking to catch the hovering spirit, neglect the letter. In history, accordingly, we find the unimaginative and spiritless retailer of facts, or the bare expounder of principles, on the one hand; and, on the other, the painter of imaginary scenes, weakly lingering over the outer form and comeliness of his subject, instead of at once admiring its contour, and piercing to its heart. But the true historian knows that beauty is truth, and that truth is beauty; and that his business is to shew that there is identity between both. He labours now to reduce each character or event to its elements, and now to build it up into a fair and living whole. On his page there will alternate profound discussion and brilliant picture-writing — nay, at times, there will appear that most difficult and most delightful of all styles, in which severe truth and poetical beauty, like the bough and the bloom of the apple-branch, seem inextricably one; in which truth springs from earth, and yet remains truth still; in which thought seems severely, and in measured steps, to dance, and the music is no

mortal business and "no sound that the earth owns." He will remember that true metaphor is often the algebra, at once of facts and of principles, lessening their bulk but not their value, and, unlike algebra, shewing them in a new and vivid lustre. A thousand facts may thus sometimes be enclosed in a short description, like a whole valley of ore in one massive bar of bullion. Those who remember some of the descriptions in Tacitus, Gibbon, Burke, Carlyle, and that wondrous one of the Reign of Terror by Hazlitt, will understand what we mean.

The historian must have a valid theory of progress. He must believe that we *are* involved in a regular and resistless current; but must, besides, understand, properly, what that current is, and how it flows. It is not, on the one hand, a mere oscillatory motion, although it has sometimes this aspect. It is a pendulum which at last breaks the sides of the clock that confined it. Nor is it exactly circular, like that of a wheel—although it has often this aspect also. The wheel at last resembles a momentary circle produced by a stone or rock in an advancing stream. Nor is it distinct, on-rushing, without any let or hindrance, like that of a river between even and polished cliffs. It is one motion compounded of many. To liken it to the history of an individual man, from birth to age and death, is not a fair or complete comparison, unless, indeed, we couple this with the thought of resurrection. Nations have an age, society has none—its decay, decrepitude, and death, are only apparent. It renews its youth like the eagles. There may be, indeed, a point at which it shall actually stop, and die; but that point has never yet been reached. Perhaps we may best compare its progress to that of a race, or family, in which wise and foolish, healthy and unhealthy, children succeed each other, almost alternately, till its bright consummate flower is produced, in the form of some son of genius, or man of exalted worth; after which it often comes abruptly to a close, or drags out a short and shameful existence, or has new blood injected into its veins. Thus society is advancing, now swiftly, now slowly, now creeping through muddy

channels, now foaming in wild cataracts, now in glimmer and now in gloom—till it shall reach that apex in the future which may, perhaps, form the signal for its overthrow and removal—its work and its destiny done, and a sublimer system prepared to take its place.

Emerson somewhere says, "Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For everything that is given, something is taken. Society acquires new arts, and loses old instincts. The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He has a fine Geneva watch, but cannot tell the hour by the sun." These *dicta* are repeatedly, in other places, contradicted by this author himself. But apart from this, they contain only a portion of truth, mixed with a predominance of fallacy. They merely mark the irregularity of advancement, and the limitations, deductions, and discounts to which it is necessarily exposed. They shew only that there are sinkings, as well as swellings, in the vast on-moving billow; and they indirectly deny that that billow ever has moved, or ever shall move, more quickly than at ordinary times, to the breath of supernatural impulse.

It is granted to this author, that all the great good gained hitherto by the progress of society, has been attended with great new evils, as well as with the loss of important old advantages. But it is maintained that, on the whole, the progress has been real and in the right direction; that the good gained counterbalances alike the new evil and the old loss; that, although it be true, perhaps, that the savage is stronger and less exposed to bodily and mental disease—to consumption and to madness—than the civilized man, yet the latter is, taking him all in all, the better and nobler being; even as the dog, though often the victim of hydrophobia, is superior to the tiger and the sloth; that the lengthening shadow, is caused by the lengthening stature of man; that the new power and wisdom generated by the progress of society, are mitigat-

ing its new evils, and if able already to mitigate, may be able soon to remove them — and that, in fine, we christians, at least, are certain that we are in good hands, that God careth for the race, as for a family of children, has interfered, ere now, directly in our behalf, and has promised another and a final interference.

The advantages to a historian of a proper theory of progress are obvious. Possessed of it, he will not look upon the ages as linked together in an iron chain of blind necessity, with each link of equal weight and blackness. Nor will he see in them a chaos of everlasting and aimless fluctuations. Nor will he see in them a current of partial brightness, strangely interrupted by blank chasms, which not only disturb the steady stream, but seem to render its progress a mere illusion. But recognizing in them a subdued, calm, cumulative course of tendency, all whose pauses are but apparent, all whose seeming blanks are but clouds disguising an interior line of light, all whose retrograde movements are but coils in one complicated mass of gold — and believing, also, in divine interference, as well as providential superintendence, he will rate every age at its proper value, call none low or high, clean or common, except according to the highest standard of comparison, and endeavour to look on each and all, as steps, more or less visible, in the path of the divine circuits.

For, we name now, as springing directly from our former remark, as the last and principal quality of the genuine historian, that he be able to perceive, amidst the developments of history, the grand purpose and agency pervading and directing the whole. He will, with the perseverance of a bloodhound, but with the heart of a man and the faith of a christian, trace that divine ray, which, from the first hour of man's existence has followed his course—pierced his dungeons—crossed his battle-fields —beckoned forward smiling from his scaffolds—touched the axes and flames of his revolutions with the glory of hope — and which is to shine on more and more till the perfect day arrive, and till its solitary beam, at the

gates of earth's golden evening, meet and mingle with heaven's

"Bright pomp *descending* jubilant."

"God in history" has become of late a common and almost a hackneyed term. Its true meaning is not that God capriciously interferes with events—or that he watches them with the eye of a partizan — or that he lies in eager ambuscade to strike into the plot and peril—or that we are to find in every national calamity a display of his special anger, or in every blessing and fortunate turn of affairs a special manifestation of his love. There are those who write as if the Divine Being were a Huguenot, and others as if he were a Legitimate—some as if the cause of the Covenant had been the only cause of God on earth, and others as if, after the death of Charles, he was somehow provoked into a royalist. This is one extreme. There is another equally pernicious. It is that of looking on history as the mere development of certain moral principles—mighty, irresistible, but cold and dead—unconnected with a personal Deity, and seeming to the imagination huge scythed mill-wheels, grinding down all below and all around them into powder or blood. Some celebrated authors of this day are perpetually speaking of "eternal laws of retribution" without a law-giver — of "judgment-days" without a judge — of giant crimes punished, yet punished by *no one*, like the famous extinction of the eyes of the Cyclops, when (using the name given by the crafty Ulysses) he told his brethren without the cave "No man kills me." Such laws, principles, and punishments there do, doubtless, exist; but ere we feel their awfulness, or at all understand their method, we must regard them as the expressions of a merciful, righteous, regal Mind, possessing a personal identity and a positively distinct will. There is a third error committed by some—that, namely, of perpetually, at every turning of their story, pointing to God and saying, "Is he not there?" while the reader has seen him all along. The historian should, first of all, strongly state his conviction that God

is in history — in it all, and not in mere sections — should proceed to steep his whole narrative in a spirit of faith, should pause occasionally to make distinct and solemn reference to the great original — but should not run along, bawling out at every step, under the blazing noon, "Yonder's the sun!" It is thus that Rollin, and even D'Aubigné, have often stultified themselves. More particularly the historian of God incarnate in human story, should recognize the varied attributes of divinity and the leading principles of the christian faith, as interpenetrating, overarching, and underlying it all. He should see in the past the wine-press of divine wrath—the hall of divine justice—the harvest-field of divine goodness and love—the spot where divine truth has never failed to keep its solemn assignations—the arena of divine power—the school where presides eternal wisdom—the darkened stage where walks the shrouded sovereignty of the Most High—the *sensorium* of his omniscience—the listening ear of his omnipresence — and the centre or meeting-place of all the wondrous throng. He should hail in the moral character and developments of history, the reconciliation of the various divine principles, mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace embracing each other; and should see in this a type and foretaste of man's reconciliation to himself and to his God. Above all, he should find in history additional proof of the great leading truths of christianity, and should find these, in their turn, reflecting light upon many of the dark places and intricate questions of history.

Such is, in part, our ideal of a historian after truth, love, and beauty's "own heart." We state it as a guide to others and to ourselves especially, should we ever attempt a larger and more elaborate work than the following, with a more systematic historical aim. We produce it as a gauge for judging of the histories of the past. We produce it, in fine, because we are convinced that, while intellect, learning, and historical power are valuable to a historian, or to a sketcher of historical outlines, candour, width of view, sincerity of spirit, love of truth, and

christian feeling and belief, are incomparably more so. These latter were not found in Gibbon, although the former were. Arnold possessed a large measure of all, and had he lived would have approached the highest standard. One man only now survives, who could have with ease snatched the richest laurels from the hand of the historic muse, and written the history of the fourth, or even of the fifth, monarchy, in a style of colossal breadth and grandeur, blended with minute finish, in some degree worthy of the theme. But, alas! the shades of evening are gathering around the form of this potent architect, and his hand is now holding the chisel tremulously, and is ready, we fear, to drop it in death.

CHAPTER II.

THE OCCASION OF THE COVENANT.

THE term covenant, as well as the thing, is far older than the period to which this book refers. Not to speak of the covenants so often mentioned in Scripture between man and man, and between God and the people, we know that some of the protestant princes in Germany, and the protestant church of France, formed bonds or covenants, solemnly pledging themselves to defend their religion against its enemies, and that these were of much service in their struggles against popery and arbitrary power. But in Scotland there was no imitation of such continental engagements, till it was created by circumstances of a peculiar and painful kind. These we proceed now briefly to detail.

In Scotland, as in England, the Reformation was very mainly the work of a single individual. Henry VIII., by the strength of his passions, relieved South Britain from the papal yoke, and John Knox, by the energy of his will, character, and eloquence, reformed Scotland. The result in both cases, therefore, was very imperfect. The one was not England's, but Henry VIII.'s, and the other not Scotland's, but Knox's, Reformation. In England the elements of religious reaction and of strife continued to exist profusely in the arbitrary power of the bishops—in the Erastian authority exercised by the crown, and in the popish pomp and formality which still distinguished the ceremonies of the church. In Scotland a wider sweep had taken place—more of the rubbish of the old system had been removed, and the power of the king was better balanced by the join

influence of the ministers and the nobility. Still, at and before Knox's death, the affairs of the kirk were in a very unsettled state. On the one side were the clergy, in general sincere and learned men, neither void of ambition nor devoured by it, but naturally disposed to maintain what they thought their own divinely-given right of presbyterian parity; and backed in this purpose by the great mass of their flocks, including many eminent nobles. On the other hand was the court, the regent Morton, and some of the superintendents (a sort of rude, half-shaped bishops who had been appointed, extempore, to rule over their brethren during the first anarchy of the Reformation), whose avowed object was to retain the ancient hierarchy of archbishops, bishops, &c. Apart from conscientious conviction, motives can easily be assigned for the conduct of both parties. The ministers did not choose to be lorded over by persons no better than themselves, and thus degraded in the eyes of their people. Those of the nobility who took their side, feared the rise of a class of ecclesiastical dignitaries who should rival them in wealth and influence, and both dreaded the additional power which might thus accrue to the crown. The superintendents, on the other hand, wished the episcopal power they had partially enjoyed confirmed and extended, and Earl Morton was anxious to secure his own authority, and by making certain ministers bishops, to render them and the whole order slaves. His plan, however, although carried by a convention of his creatures, was overruled by the General Assembly, and the result was a compromise, which consisted in the creation of certain nominal dignitaries, who were honoured with the name of bishops, and a small part of their revenue, but who allowed the principal portion to slip quietly into the pockets of the nobles. These were called derisively tulchan bishops—a tulchan being a calf's skin stuffed with straw, which the country people set up beside the cow to induce her to give her milk more freely. The bishop, it was said, had the title, but my lord had the milk. These tulchans were laymen, they wielded no influence, and seem to have been merely

used to keep warm the stalls till the union of the crowns of England and Scotland, under James the Sixth, should make it safe and prudent to fill them with veritable bishops.

It is said that Knox on his deathbed protested against this arrangement, and told Morton that he would rue it. He probably saw, with prophetic eye, through the thin ribs of those men of straw, the long procession of their successors, whose line was to stretch out almost to the crack of Scotland's doom. He knew his countrymen, and he knew what he called the "estate of the bishops" well. He knew, whatever may be said in favour of the episcopal institution, and of its working in certain serene conditions of society, that, first of all, the *perfervidum ingenium* of his countrymen would never abide its semi-papal rule; and that, secondly, in the rough and troublous contests which were at hand, it was certain to become the ally of the nobles, when they were disposed to be oppressors; the creature of the crown when it was bent on despotism, and an iron rod to the people whenever they began to feel and to assert their rights. The experience of three centuries has confirmed the sagacity of his views.

For a considerable period thereafter, the ecclesiastical state of Scotland was very singular. The poor bishops, or tulchans, were standing ridiculous and contented in their pastures—their masters were draining the milk, and the General Assembly of the north were surrounding the absurd scene, now barking at it, now laughing, but totally unable to prevent it. In other words, the tulchans had the name of revenue, the ministers the name of power, and the court and nobles the reality of both. The assembly called the tulchans to account, but they refused to own their authority, and the weight of the court and nobility was exerted in behalf of those unconsecrated calf-skins, for not even consecration was theirs.

This ludicrous scene was interrupted by the entrance of a Man. That man was Andrew Melville. He came back from a ten years' residence on the continent, mature in learning, and with not a little of the fire and fervour of

his predecessor, Knox. He entered almost instantly into the arena of religious politics. He was employed in drawing up the Second Book of Discipline—a work containing, among other things, a strong protest against lay patronage, and a vigorous, if not successful, attempt to draw a boundary line between civil and ecclesiastical authority. He did other and sterner work when employed a little later, in defending the rights of the church against the usurpation of James VI. Having presented, on one occasion, a bold remonstrance from the assembly to the council, Arran, one of its members, looking round with a threatening countenance, exclaimed, "Who dare subscribe these treasonable articles?" "I dare," replied Melville, and stepping forward to the table he took the pen from the clerk and subscribed. There spoke the spirit of John Knox, and of a greater than he, the man who said, "I appeal unto Cæsar."

Meanwhile Morton was compelled to resign, and James VI., at twelve years of age, was persuaded by his interested and parasitical lords to mount the throne. Fool, pedant, despot, and learned ignoramus as he ultimately approved himself—George Buchanan's unworthy pupil, and chased as it were all his life afterwards by the echo of his vengeful lash—his reign, nevertheless, commenced auspiciously. The boy-king entered Edinburgh in triumph; his old tutor, we can fancy, for he was still alive, looking on with grim sardonic pleasure, blended with contempt, and with wonder that he had made so much of the "saul-less blockhead." The next year James did one act which deeply tended to ingratiate him with his people, he agreed to a solemn league, called the *National Covenant*. This engagement included an abjuration of popery, and an obligation, ratified by an oath, to support the protestant religion. It was sworn and subscribed, first of all, by the king and his household, and afterwards, in consequence of an order of council and an act of the General Assembly, by all ranks of persons in the kingdom.

Still the prelatical party were not idle. On the death

of Boyd, the titular archbishop of Glasgow, Lennox having offered the vacant see to several ministers, on condition of their making over to him most part of its revenues by a private bargain, one Montgomery, minister of Stirling, was base enough to accept the temptation. Around this person there arose a memorable contest, which for a season shook the kingdom. The king and court took his part. The assembly, on the other hand, were proceeding to confirm a sentence of suspension against him, when a messenger-at-arms appeared, to arrest procedure and charge rebellion against the assembly, if they should carry their purpose into execution. This was the beginning of that long strife between the civil and the ecclesiastical powers, which was of late dubiously terminated by the disruption—the first of that long line of *Interdicts*, which have become so painfully and ludicrously notorious, and which cast such a glare of light upon the evils of the connection between church and state. The assembly acted with great spirit and promptitude—summoned Montgomery to their bar, and, on his not appearing, laid him under the extreme sentence of excommunication—a sentence which in spirit of violent opposition on the part of the culprit, backed by the magistrates, was intimated from various churches, and carried into effect. Montgomery himself, having shortly after visited Edinburgh, underwent a species of lynch law, and was at last literally kicked out at one of the city gates. And even King James, when he heard of it, lay down on the Inch of Perth, and roared his fill of laughter, saying, that Montgomery was a "seditious loon."

His laughter, however, was soon turned into tears, on the occasion of the celebrated "Raid of Ruthven." Some of the presbyterian lords, chafing under the yoke of Lennox and Arran, seized on the king's person, and treated the Lord's anointed with very little ceremony. It is uncertain if they were instigated to this by the clergy, but it is certain that the assembly approved of the deed, and equally so, that it was of great ultimate injury to their cause. It issued in the restoration of the unworthy

favourites, and exasperated in James's childish mind the hatred which he had all along felt against the presbyterian cause.

From the Raid of Ruthven till the year 1592, things went ill with the Scottish kirk. Melville, and many others of like mind, had to flee for their lives to England. A succession of acts were passed by an obsequious parliament, ordaining that no ecclesiastical assembly should be held without the king's consent; giving absolute power to the king and the privy council, and supremacy to the bishops over their brethren. Against these *Black Acts*, as they were called, protests were taken, and denunciations uttered by some of the bolder ministers, but to no purpose. The two dark wings of arbitrary and hierarchical power seemed meeting and closing around Scotland, when to the astonishment and delight of thousands, James himself, partly frightened at the Spanish Armada, and the disclosure it made of the hostile designs of the popish princes of the continent, and partly induced by the counsels of a new adviser, the subtle Chancellor Maitland, announced himself a convert to presbyterianism, proclaimed the kirk of Scotland purer than even that of Geneva; and characterized the service of the Anglican church "as an ill-mumbled mass in English,"—words well remembered afterwards, and which should not have been implicitly believed even then. But any little concession or liberality, as well as a little learning, or wit, or continence, goes a great way in the case of kings. Two years after the parliament restored presbytery in all its breadth, abolished all the "acts contrair to the trew religion," and, with the exception of the law of patronage, which was left untouched, put the ecclesiastical affairs of Scotland on a footing which was perfectly satisfactory to the presbyterian party. It perhaps could hardly have been expected that any party at that time should have felt the degradation incurred by permitting a parliament to settle the affairs of a church; or that they should have anticipated the evils which were to spring from the interference of the civil power with religion. It was decreed in this, as in

so many other cases, that we should be instructed by the memory of ancestral errors, and not by that of ancestral wisdom.

This act, deemed so important, won by a struggle, and accepted with boundless gladness, was far from closing the controversy, or leading to permanent peace. In place of prelacy, remanded for a time to its den, a mightier enemy began to stalk abroad. Popery was again lifting up its blood-stained crest in the land. A plot for destroying the protestant religion, concocted in Spain, found some willing agents among the Scottish lords. Energetic measures against the traitors were advised, and in part taken. But James, as usual, shrunk and shuffled. He had little love for popery, but he had a great dread of papists. They were good king-killers, he said; and he had no notion of being murdered, either by papists or presbyterians. He even went so far as to invite some of the popish lords back to court; and might have gone farther, had not the remonstrances of the clergy, and, especially, the rough voice of Andrew Melville, compelled him to pause. This brave man, returned from his banishment, headed a deputation to the king, and made the roof of Falkland palace, if not the echoes of the near Lomond hills, to ring, with the harsh thunder of his warning and counsel. We can easily conceive poor King James exhibiting similar symptoms and signals of distress, to those which Scott has described in the park at Greenwich, when he found himself alone with Lord Glenvarloch—fidgetting, shaking, fingering at his garments, rolling to and fro, and becoming pale with fright—as Melville told him that "there were two kings and two kingdoms in this realm—one King James, and the other Jesus Christ, whose subject James VI. is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member." He recovered himself, however, and with something of the air of his "fair and fause" mother, Mary, dismissed the deputation.

In 1596, the National Covenant, amid circumstances of peculiarly solemn interest, was renewed in Edinburgh; and the action was, by the Assemblies' order, repeated

throughout all Scotland; which seemed as one man to rejoice in the oath of God. This gave a short-lived impulse to the presbyterian cause. But so soon as this last sincere assembly, as a historian calls it, of the kirk, dispersed, the old controversy between the king and the clergy, broke out with renewed violence. They attacked his arbitrary conduct from the pulpit; and he threatened them with civil pains, as rebels to his supreme authority. By dint of incessant attempts, compounded of cajolery and terror, he at last prevailed upon the church courts to allow certain ministers to have a vote in parliament, thus endowing them with political power, and subjecting them to still more complete political subservience. Once this had been secured. He had created these ministers bishops, and they, contrary to the caveats of an after Assembly, sat and voted in the next parliament—the Gowrie conspiracy succeeded; and the general incredulity of the ministers as to James's account of it, gave him a new handle against them. One Robert Bruce, a man of determined courage, was banished to France for his unbelief in the king's version of a matter which even now seems involved in impenetrable mystery.

Such was the unsatisfactory state of matters in Scotland, when, in 1603, Queen Elizabeth died, and James mounted the throne of England. Scarcely was he crowned, than, his ears still tingling with the bare bold words of Bruce and Melville—instigated, besides, by the English bishops, who hailed in him a king after their own heart—he renewed his efforts to establish episcopacy in Scotland. To secure this, he must, through his royal prerogative, trample on the rights of the General Assemblies, and assume the power of summoning or dismissing them at his pleasure. Notwithstanding, a few ministers dared to meet at Aberdeen; constituted themselves, in spite of a royal communication; transacted business and dissolved, after having fixed their next meeting. Six of them were forthwith dragged to Linlithgow, tried and found guilty of high treason, and transported to France. A few years later, Melville, who had been summoned to London, was, on a

trifling pretext, thrown into the Tower; and, after a confinement of four years, had to follow his brethren to France; and there, in 1622, he surrendered to God his indomitable spirit.

The thing next proposed was, that the bishops should be appointed perpetual moderators, or presidents of all meetings of presbyteries, synods, and assemblies. To secure this most unpopular measure, James called an assembly, and, by the dexterous distribution of bribes, compassed the end. Golden coins, called angels, were plentifully bestowed on the needier and more clamorous of the clergy; and hence the assembly obtained the name of the Angelical Assembly! What, indeed, has the history of church establishments been, but that of a long series of bribes, more or less direct—of successive flights of such equivocal *angels?* This corruption was practised under the pretext of discharging the expenses of poor ministers from a distance. But, as old Row naïvely remarks, "Some, neare Glasgow, who voted the king's way, got the wages of Balaam. And some *gracious* ministers in the north, who voted negativé, got no gold at all." He does not tell us whether *all* the money was distributed before the vote. No sooner was this object of the bishops gained, than three of them set out for London; and having received episcopal ordination from the English prelates, returned, and consecrated the rest of their brethren. This did not, apparently, add much to the respect entertained for them in Scotland. Their persons were ridiculed when living—satirical epitaphs were composed on them when dead. The presbyterian historians, as might have been expected, have always reviled them. But, perhaps, a better proof of their insignificance lies in the fact of the extraordinary scheme by which James was obliged to prop up their influence. He founded a Court of High Commission, composed of knights, noblemen, prelates and ministers; who were empowered to receive and judge of all appeals from church courts; to summon, fine, excommunicate, or depose ministers chargeable with actions or speeches opposed to the established order of the church, and to combine, in a monstrous and

tyrannical hybrid, the offices of a civil and ecclesiastical tribunal. An institution so well fitted to be a formidable machine in the hands of despotism, was permitted for awhile, but not long, to lie in abeyance.

In 1617, James came down to Scotland, from a desire he said, "like a salmon, to visit his breeding-place," and from this journey, there dates a succession of new efforts to thrust both the government and the worship of England upon his ancient subjects. Not contented with establishing the Anglican forms in his own chapel at Holyrood, he compelled parliament to pass an act, giving him, along with the bishops, absolute authority over the external government of the church; upon the increased resistance of the clergy to this arbitrary measure, he called an assembly, first at St. Andrews, and then at Perth, where five articles,—generally known as the five articles of Perth —were enacted. They consisted of—First: Kneeling at the communion. Second: The observance of certain holidays, such as Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, &c. Third: Episcopal confirmation. Fourth: Private baptism. And Fifth: Private communicating. Many good reasons the presbyterians assigned against these articles, but the fact was, that they abhorred the manner of their imposition more than the articles themselves, and foresaw, besides, that were they passed the king and his creatures would make them a precedent for other and more obnoxious measures. The five articles were carried in Perth by a majority, and confirmed by parliament, amid a violent storm of thunder and lightning, in which the presbyterians read an omen of the divine displeasure, and which the church party, with equal sense and justice, compared to the sanction given to the Ten Commandments, by the tempests of Sinai!

If sanctioned, they were certainly not obeyed, like the laws of Moses. The history of the kirk, for some time after, records principally the particulars of the indignant resistance made to the articles of Perth. Christmas was not observed, private baptism was not sought, and the practice of kneeling at the Lord's table, was shunned

with especial horror, as an act of idolatrous worship to the mere symbol of Christ's body, so that sometimes the congregations went out during the ceremony — the elders stood back and refused to officiate, and the poor minister was left on his knees alone. If to any there seem a certain littleness in such recusance, was it not less still to impose dubious or insignificant rites which were certain to provoke it? The question "Who began first? Who took the initiative?—in any play of ruinous nonsense, is always of essential importance in judging of the distribution of the respective shares of ridicule or blame? Besides, while the offending party were in general contemptible tools of power, the offended discover traits of magnanimity and heroism which rank them with the great of their country. This will be confessed, we think, by all who read the lives of John Welch, and his nobler wife (who, when the king said he would pardon her husband if he submitted to the bishops, lifted up her apron, and said "I'd rather kep his head there);" of Robert Bruce, George Dunbar, Andrew Duncan, and others. They might be, and were, in some points, mistaken; many can see as little evil in kneeling at the Lord's table, as in eating the elements there, or as in kneeling at family devotion. King James had probably no intention whatever of making the five articles of Perth the feelers of popery — but, if wrong, the men were not mere wranglers —they were profoundly conscientious — they were intelligent as well as sincere, and the sacrifices they endured in the cause rose almost to the sublime.

Between this and the death of James VI. nothing of particular moment occurred, except deplorable complaints from the clergy of general religious destitution, coldness, and laxity, and occasional revivals in various parts of the country, such as Stewarton, in Ayrshire, and the kirk of Shott's, in Lanarkshire. These revivals are interesting, because they seem to have been conducted with less extravagance than in after times; because in the week-day and out-of-door assemblies convened at them, we find the distinct germ of the famous field-preachings of

Charles II.'s day; and because they were the first of a long series of religious-revival phenomena, not yet entirely extinct, which have been productive of a vast amount both of good and evil, and on which history is compelled to pass a severely-measured and cautious verdict. The revivals of Wesley and Whitfield, of Cambuslang, of America, and latterly of Kilsyth and Dundee, may all be traced to the kirk of Shotts, and to contemporaneous movements. The common-sense view of these religious agitations may perhaps be completely comprised in the following remarks, which we cannot stop to illustrate. First: They are not to be stimulated by artificial means. Second: Their rise is generally on slight occasion—sudden—electric—irresistible. Third: Wise men will neither recklessly oppose, nor passively yield to their current, but will watch, measure, and manage it. Fourth: It is impossible to keep them up beyond a certain time, and the moment their spontaneity becomes doubtful, that moment they should be viewed with suspicion. Fifth: Good and evil are both produced by them, in varying proportions—the good consisting in the awakening of the careless and sensual, the stirring up of the pious and the revelation of the fact that the old power can still be exerted by the old truths; the evil consisting in the excessive excitement, the unhealthy agitation, the self-delusion, fanaticism, spiritual pride, and hypocrisy, they sometimes largely produce, besides the setting up of a false standard, and the temptation to the use of improper and morbid means. The good, however, decreases, and the evil swells as they continue; till at last, on their subsidence, it is frequently found that the residuum of benefit they have left is inconsiderable, and not very pure, and that the reaction in which they have issued, is great, various, and fraught with direct danger to the general cause of christianity.

James VI. having closed a reign as nondescript and awkward in its aspects as the man himself, his unfortunate son, Charles, mounted the throne. He was destined, as being a more decided character, to encounter more

decided opposition, to meet a more decided fate, and to leave a more decided and definite impression, whether it were good or bad, upon the history of his country. One might imagine him to have formed himself, or been formed, upon the principle of entire and contemptuous contradiction to his father's character. James was pusillanimous — Charles brave, at times even to rashness. James was fickle — Charles obstinate. James was *pawky*, as the Scotch call it — in Charles, prudence deepened into craft. James had a *bonhommie*, which propitiated his enemies — the cold and haughty manners of Charles were as repulsive as his temper was high and his principles arbitrary. James had learning without wisdom—Charles had taste, talent, and accomplishments. James was despised without being hated—Charles was detested and respected in equal proportions. James was very little of the king or Stewart, he was designed by nature, for a rough-tongued, but kind-hearted Scottish *Dominie*—great on longs and shorts, and never liking his scholars so well as when storming and wielding the lash in their midst — Charles, added the policy of an Italian prince and the hauteur of a Spanish hidalgo to the hot-blooded pride of a Highland chieftain. In three respects only they resembled each other, namely, in disregard to truth, in high estimate of their royal prerogative, and in aversion to all dissent, whether in politics or in religion. Each, however, expressed the two last in his own particular way. James in testy and irregular bursts, and Charles by a steady, cumulative system of attack, like a serpent sliding along his brilliant and deadly path, through the bushes to his prey.

Charles visited Scotland in 1633, and disgusted the stricter presbyterians, first, by permitting his household to profane the Lord's-day—then by allowing some of the bishops, Laud among the rest, to insult the public forms of church-worship; and next, by getting parliament to pass an act empowering him to regulate ecclesiastical vestments. This measure was carried with difficulty, and only in consequence of violent threats on the part of his

majesty. When expressing immediately after his astonishment at the change of popular feeling towards him, Lord Loudoun pithily remarked, "Sire, the people of Scotland will obey you in everything with the utmost cheerfulness, if you do not touch their religion and conscience." This noble lord knew the Scotch well. They have never, as a nation, been distinguished by any violent attachments to theoretical freedom, and they are constitutionally a loyal people. No cause has ever moved them to their depth, or stung them into furious resistance, except that of their national independence, when threatened in the days of Wallace, and that of their national church, when persecuted in the times of the Covenanters.

The last ounce was now about to be added to the back of the patient camel. Laud, in place of a book of prayers, which from John Knox's time had been permitted to weaker ministers, determined to draw up a new service of his own, more closely modelled on the popish breviary, and to force it upon the Scotch. After very short preliminary notice, this service-book came down, with orders from the king and council that it should be used in all the churches. This alarmed the ministers, who, although obliged to submit to much, were determined not to endure this, and made their pulpits ring with invectives against it and its authors. But an old woman became a far more effective orator in the case. On the appointed 23rd of July, when the Dean of Edinburgh, in the midst of a great crowd, proceeded, in the high church of St. Giles, to read the liturgy, Jenny Geddes—honour to her name! lifted up her stool, and crying out, "Villain, wilt thou read the mass at my lug," launched it at his head! It was the signal for universal uproar, and the dean fled. The Bishop of Edinburgh strove next to stem the tumult, but in vain; and both, as they were guarded homewards, were saluted with hard epithets, and very narrowly escaped more formidable weapons than words.

The Edinburgh mob are proverbially fierce, and were now thoroughly roused. Their excitement speedily spread to the rest of the country. Women, in all directions,

headed risings against the liturgy; amidst which, by and by, the crests of some of the gentry appeared; a petition for the suppression of the new service was generally signed. It was followed, indeed, by a new and more stringent proclamation, enjoining obedience to the canons, condemning the proceedings of the supplicants, as they were called, and forbidding their public meetings under the penalties of treason. But the supplicants determined, as a last resource, to proceed in a body to the Scottish privy council in Stirling, and protest against the proclamation as soon as it was fairly issued. This was done accordingly, both at Edinburgh and Stirling; and such were the crowds, and such the excitement in the former place, that the council sought a parley, and agreed that, if the multitudes would disperse, the commissioners might appoint some of their number to represent the rest, and remain in Edinburgh for the settlement of the affairs of the church. To this they agreed, but determined, before they departed, to renew and extend the National Covenant.

It was accordingly renewed in the Grey Friars church, Edinburgh, on the 1st of March, 1638. On an appointed day, after sermon, an immense parchment was produced, spread on a tombstone, and subscribed by such numbers that the paper fell short, and many had only room for their initials, some of which were written in blood. Great was the joy and enthusiasm in the city, and throughout the land. It was one of those moments in which the spiritual life of a nation comes to a climax, and its deep cup runs over. It reminds us of the federation feasts of the French revolution—although the principles of the two nations were diametrically opposite—and, like them, may be compared to those unnaturally fine days, which seem to lose their way from one season to another, and which are certain to be succeeded by foul or stormy weather. There are in Scotland some who still sigh for the year 1638 to come round, as if any combination of circumstances could restore its like, any more than the great passover of Josiah—as if its restoration were desirable; as if the prolongation of such excitement as

then prevailed were not certain to produce more evil than good, and as if there were not waiting for us in the future more glorious moral and spiritual gala-days, to which that of 1638 was but a lowering and cloudy morn. It is the child who cries to get yesterday back again—the man accepts to-day, and looks forward, with faith and hope, to a bright to-morrow.

Nevertheless, Scotland, almost unanimous in religious opinion, and wearing one strong bond around its hardy heart, though only for a season, is a spectacle as spirit-stirring as it has been rare; and impartial history must admit, that this movement, begun by the clergy and the gentry, was seconded warmly, not only in the southern and midland districts, but in the north too, by great masses of the people; and must record with respect the names of some of the leaders of the movement, both clerical and lay, such as Alexander Henderson, Andrew Cant, Robert Dickson, and the Earls of Rothes and Loudoun.

Charles next sent down the Marquis of Hamilton with terms of peace on his lips; but, as was generally believed, with concealed and bitter enmity in his heart. Vain, however, were all his efforts to conciliate or to deceive the Covenanters. He entered Edinburgh in procession, amid an assemblage of seventy thousand, including seven thousand ministers, in their cloaks—many scowling out their contempt and suspicion—and more dissolved in tears, and beseeching him to remove the bishops, and to restore their beloved pastors. In vain did the king himself offer to sign the original form of the Covenant, in which prelacy was unnoticed; nothing would satisfy these determined men but a free General Assembly, to settle unreservedly the state of the church.

This was at length called. It met in Glasgow, in November, 1638, and forms one of the most critical events in the history of these times; critical, because it committed both the church and the government to their respective sides in the controversy, and drove them to a point where the sword of Brennus must be cast into the scale. The royal commissioner, after having in vain

protested against certain proceedings of the assembly, attempted to dissolve it and retired. The assembly and their president, the brave Henderson, protested in their turn, continued their sittings, surrounded by the retainers of the covenanting nobles, set the arms of the court at defiance—condemned the service-book—renounced the five articles of Perth—abjured prelacy, and restored presbyterianism in its room—and, as they at last rose—

> "There rising, all at once, was like the sound
> Of thunder, heard remote—"

—the ominous thunder of approaching conflict, confusion and blood. They did, indeed, forward to London another supplication, seeking to explain the reasons of their conduct. Charles answered this by pouring two armies, one of which he commanded in person, into Scotland. Thus came the "Bishops' war,"—the nickname Charles received of "Canterbury's Knight,"—and the strong measures instantly taken by the Covenanters to resist his double missive of liturgies and leaden bullets. General Lesslie, who had been a soldier in the army of Gustavus Adolphus, was promoted to the command of the troops by the orders of parliament, which had now identified itself with the General Assembly. He acted with great energy—summoned troops together by beacon-fires, as had been done in England in the times of the Spanish Armada—seized on all the fortified places—and erected fortifications around the town of Leith, to secure Edinburgh against the king's fleet. When that fleet at last appeared, with five or six thousand troops on board, commanded by Hamilton, the people thronged every avenue, prevented the soldiers from setting foot on shore. Hamilton's mother, a genuine Deborah of the Covenant, came on horseback, to meet, and, if necessary, to shoot her son, carrying pistols loaded with *gold* balls for the purpose; and the marquis, partly overpowered by an interview with her on board his ship, and partly frightened at the news of a fight at Kelso, in which the Scotch were victors, was glad to make his escape.

Concentrating his forces around a hill to the south-east of Edinburgh, called Dunse-Law, Lesslie awaited the approach of the king. It was fine, we are told, to see those bold extempore troops, consisting mainly of stout, fresh-coloured ploughmen, the blue banner, now for the first time unfurled, with the words, "For Christ's Crown and Covenant," in golden letters, stamped on it, floating over their heads—here "eating their legs of lamb," there stretched in their cloaks and blue ribbands, yonder listening to "good sermons" each morning and evening; and yonder again, singing psalms in their own tents. Their general enjoyed their affection, and they proved it, like all other armies, by giving him a nickname; even as Cromwell's soldiers called him "Old Noll;" Napoleon's the "Little Corporal;" and as Cæsar's men sang ribald songs about their mighty leader, Lesslie's named him the old *little crooked* soldier; for, like Alexander the Great, Nelson, Napoleon, and Suwarrow, his bodily presence was extremely small, composed, like theirs, of skin, marrow, bone and fire.

The king, feeling, as it were by instinct, that that blue flag was already fluttering with the blast of his destruction, proposed a negotiation. A treaty of a vague and unsatisfactory kind was agreed upon, and the general disbanded his troops, retaining, however, his officers upon half-pay. The king was dissatisfied with the treaty, and with the manner in which the Covenanters fulfilled their stipulations; he sought, it is said, to entangle their ministers by treachery, but was at last induced to grant them another General Assembly in Edinburgh, August, 1639. Here the "pacification at Birks," as the recent truce was called, seemed re-enacted upon another stage. The king's commissioner sanctioned an act affirming substantially the decisions of the assembly of Glasgow; the leaders of the Edinburgh assembly expressed their gratitude and surprise by loyal terms, and by streaming tears; and having obtained the consent of the commissioner and the Scotch privy council, ordered, alas! in the fulness of their hearts, and in the blindness of their

"times of ignorance," the covenant to be subscribed by all classes within the kingdom, under certain formidable pains and penalties. But "all was false and hollow." The king, displeased at the conduct of the assembly, threw the blame of the concessions upon the commissioner, and when the Scottish parliament met in June, 1640, to sanction what the assembly had done, he abruptly prorogued it. The members remonstrated through the medium of Lord Loudoun, who was cast into the Tower, and nearly suffered death, for his pains. Charles, shortly after, in defiance of former treaties, prepared again to invade Scotland, but the Scottish army got the start, entered England by hasty marches, and encountering him at Newburn, gained a decisive victory. This led to negotiations, begun at Ripon, and transferred to London. Henderson, Baillie, Gillespie, and Blair, repairing thither, on "little nags," to assist in bringing them to a successful termination.

In England it was already the "beginning of the end." Laud and the star-chamber had long been busy pillorying, whipping, slitting the noses, cutting the ears, and branding the faces of the puritans. But in 1641 broke out the Irish rebellion, with its fearful butcheries, and the shock of it, made the persecutors themselves to pause and tremble. Charles, about the same time, visited Scotland, for the purpose of gaining over the Covenanters, and obtaining their aid against the English parliament. He declared himself ready to throw episcopacy overboard, and even ratified the deeds of the Glasgow assembly. But it was *too late*. The Scotch were already on terms with the Long Parliament, and projecting an extension of the covenant to the southern side of the border. Meanwhile Laud was impeached of high treason. Public feeling rose higher and higher every day against the prelates, and at last the parliament summoned an assembly of divines, both from England and Scotland, to meet at Westminster on the 1st of July, 1643, to take the state of church reform into their consideration.

The civil war having now begun, Charles denied the Scotch a parliament, but, in lieu of this, a convention of

the estates was called, and commissioners from England having been sent to join the deliberations, it was resolved to form a "solemn league and covenant between the three kingdoms, as the only means, after all others had been essayed, for the deliverance of England and Ireland out of the depths of affliction, and the preservation of the church and kingdom of Scotland from the extremity of misery, and the safety of our native king and his kingdom from destruction and desolation." And thus the germ of the National Covenant, first sanctioned by James VI., in the second year of his reign, had at length fairly blossomed into that great league, before which his son, and his son's darling systems of arbitrary power and prelacy, were doomed to fall; and which, as a sign, at one time victorious over a conquered empire, and at another "everywhere spoken against," and trampled down into dust and blood, shall live long in the memory of mankind. But the history of this document deserves and requires a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER III.

THE HISTORY OF THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT.

This must be more rapidly sketched, if possible, than the occasion which led to it.

We may indicate, first, in a word, our general sentiments as to the document, the story of which we are to trace. Looking at it in the lights of this age, it seems liable to strong objections; it was an attempt to produce an impossible result by an unchristian method. It sought uniformity of creed and discipline by the sword. It seemed a monstrous mixture of mahometanism and christianity—the voice was Jacob's, the hands were Esau's—the doctrine and government were, as we believe, those of the New Testament, but the means of propagation were carnal, and not spiritual. It were ridiculous to pretend that it was not, at the beginning, as essentially a political paper, as was latterly the People's Charter. The men who summoned the meeting of the commissioners were political men. The convention of estates was a political assembly, and it was there that the Solemn League was first proposed. In fact, at that era, religion and politics were inextricably intermingled, and the Covenant was just the full result of that confusion between the roots of the two, which the reformation had failed to remove. Certain we are, that a genuine nonconformist of this age would as soon petition for the restoration of the Star Chamber, as he would sign the Solemn League and Covenant. Still, even from our point of view, we can see, not only pallia-

ting circumstances, but noble elements, mingled in the idea and the purpose from which the Covenant sprang. The thought of uniformity proceeded in part from the desire of christian union. The uprise against oppression was inevitable, and could no longer be delayed. The men were in blood-red earnest—they were also in imminent danger. Civil and religious liberty were about to be crushed for ever. The extremity of the case seemed to demand extreme measures; their scheme was in reply to a still more iron uniformity, which seemed closing hopelessly around them. Certainly, it had been better if they had contented themselves with a defensive attitude. Assuredly, their renown, if not their success, had been far greater if they had soared to those views of ecclesiastical polity, which were already beginning to dawn on the great soul of Milton. But *non omnia possumus omnes.* We, with our present views, would as soon uplift the hammer of Jael, or wield the Rabbah-axes of David, as re-enact much that the Covenanters did, but, like Deborah and Samson, and Jael and David, they were equal to any of their day, in the eternal substance of their character: they were worthy of any age, and therefore, on the whole, we hail the blue banner of the Scottish Covenant as one of the brightest points of the past, and bright especially, because it prophecied other pinnacles in the future—the banner of Cromwell—the flag of William Prince of Orange—the American flag of Independence—the tricolor, and that yet unnamed, and unstamped standard, round which the good and the free, are to rally in the last great contest between truth and error—between tyrants and risen slaves.

To proceed to the history of the Covenant. A General Assembly met in Edinburgh, in August, 1643. Commissioners from England were again present, as at the convention of estates. The assembly met in the new church aisle of St. Giles; and there the Solemn League and Covenant was fairly formed. A civil league was, at first, all that was designed, founded on a mutual basis of defence against the common enemy, and it would have been well

if the Covenant had been nothing more. Henderson, however, who was now moderator of the assembly for the third time, thought otherwise, and himself prepared and read the draft of a religious union, which electrified the court, made its aged ministers weep for joy, and gave equal satisfaction to the estates.

In the month of September, 1643, in the church of St. Margaret's, Westminster, there met a most remarkable assembly, consisting of both houses of parliament, the assembly of divines, and the Scottish commissioners. After divine service, the Covenant was read from the pulpit, and the whole assembly stood the while uncovered, and swore to it, with their hands lifted up to heaven. Henderson next raised his lion voice, and likened the Covenant to the hand-writing on Belshazzar's wall, which, did the pope know of it, would make his heart to tremble, and his knees to shake. Having been thus sworn to, it was sent back to Scotland, and ordained by the conjunct authority of the commission of the church, and the convention of estates, to be subscribed throughout the kingdom, the former enjoining it under ecclesiastical penalties, and the latter under the pain of being punished as enemies to the king and the kingdoms.

Meanwhile, in July, 1643, the assembly of divines to the number of one hundred and fifty-one, had convened in the Abbey Church, Westminster. The members, the proceedings, and the results of this meeting have combined to invest it with profound interest. A glance at the list of the names is like looking at a scale of mountains. How the blood rises as we read a roll-call, containing such words as Selden, Henry Vane, Oliver St. John, Dr. Goodwin, Dr. Calamy, Dr. Lightfoot, Archbishop Usher, Dr. Gataker, Dr. Hammond, and Samuel Rutherfurd, men only overtopped in that age of Anakim by three who were not members—Howe, Cromwell, and Milton. The assembly was the collected pith, essence, and glory of the theology of the age; composed of men full of the ripe spirit of the reformation, and whose hearts were as bold, as their piety was ardent—their learning extensive, and their faith

firm. The purpose of their meeting, how grand! To settle, and, as it were, to crystallize, the chaos of controverting ages and elements—to frame a system of truth which should rule generations yet unborn—to cast protestantism into a pyramidal pile, on which the waves of infidelity and of superstition should beat in vain; and by so doing to save a church and a kingdom from ruin, distraction, and civil war; this, whatever we think of the success of their accomplishment, was unquestionably their aim. Their proceedings, as recorded, have little grace, but they have occasionally some grandeur. Above the level of the interminable disputes about presbytery, independency, &c., how noble, for example, stands up that figure of the aged divine, with grey, streaming locks; who, when the assembly came to answer the question, "What is God?" started from his seat, lifted up his hands to heaven, and cried out, "*Da Domine lucem!*" The fruit of the "great consult" is before us, in the shape of those documents which are still the standards of presbyterian faith and worship throughout the world. And, whatever the severer criticism of after times may say of some parts, and of many expressions, in those standards, however sternly it may condemn, for instance, the persecuting principles which poison one of their chapters, and the extremes of opinion and harshnesses of statement to which aversion to popery has sometimes pushed the authors in others; and whatever many may think about the propriety or value of such documents at all, no candid christian man will deny, that they contain in them masses of condensed and sublime truth—that some of their individual sentences, such as "God alone is Lord of the conscience," stand out as if written in stars—that as a clear, compact, popular manual of orthodox divinity; the Shorter Catechism has never been equalled, and that, altogether, had it been possible to stereotype any form or shape of that infinite thing—the truth of God—the Westminster divines would have stereotyped it; and that had it been possible to arrest and fix the elastic energies of that "fire unfolding itself!" which we call religion—

they would have arrested and fixed it for ever. This, thank God! was impossible, and this they have failed to do; but let them have their praise for the instruction the delight, the guardian power, the deep moral influences, which their writings have given and exerted over millions, and in a degree, perhaps, only inferior to the inspired volume itself.

After four years of constant and laborious sitting, the Scotch commissioners, Henderson, Baillie, Rutherfurd and Gillespie,* came back and reported the proceedings to the assembly of August, 1647, which received the Westminster Confession, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Propositions for Church Government, and the Directory for Public Worship, as parts of the covenanted uniformity of the three kingdoms, and the estates of parliament soon after said "Amen" to their proceedings.

Presbytery was now in the ascendent throughout the three kingdoms. In 1646, the parliament granted it a partial establishment in England, by appointing provincial synods and a national assembly; an arrangement, however, which took effect only in London and Lancashire. This establishment would probably have been extended to the whole country, and been found a worthy successor to the episcopalian hierarchy in bigotry and bloodshed—for it matters little who draws the sword, whether Peter, or Paul, or John, or Judas, if the sword be drawn—but for the opposition of the erastians on the one hand and the independents on the other. What the presbyterians wished was a civil sanction to the divine right of their form of government—the erastians resisted this on their principle, that the church was the creature of the state, and the independents upon theirs of toleration. The latter doctrine was carried to its full extent by some of the minor

* Samuel Rutherfurd's letter to this youth, on his death bed, reaches the sublime. Gillespie was a remarkable young man, who in debate, it is said, discomfited Selden on the erastian controversy, demolished Goodwin's defence of independency; and after these early and modestly-borne triumphs, returned home, and meekly *died* in his thirty-sixth year.

sectaries, who advanced the statement "that it is the will and command of God, that since the coming of his Son, a permission of the most Paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or antichristian, consciences and worships be granted to all men in all nations." Although the principle implied in this, will to most men now appear reasonable enough, and even a fair deduction from the words quoted above from the Confession of Faith, "God alone is Lord of the conscience," it seemed to the presbyterians absolutely blasphemous. Loud and angrily did this controversy rage—the more that the Covenanters pressed their principle of uniformity, the faster did sects increase and multiply, and the faster that they grew, the more determined against toleration the Covenanters became.

Meanwhile, all eyes were now turned to the north, where the meteor of Montrose was blazing for a season. Originally a vehement Covenanter, this remarkable man changed sides, some say owing to an interview with the king, and some because his pride and ambition were wounded by the ascendency of Argyle and Lesslie. He then levied an army—uplifted the white flag—descended the defiles of the Perthshire Highlands—gained the battle of Tibbermuir—seized on Perth—marched north to Aberdeen, the inhabitants of which, on some pretext, he put to the sword—retreated farther north to avoid Argyle, who was upon his track—made an irruption into Argyle's country, which he ravaged with fire and sword—met and routed Argyle at Inverlochy—became the undisputed master of the Highlands—was created marquis by Charles—encountered Lesslie at Philiphaugh—sustained a complete defeat—retired from Scotland till 1650, when, returning with a few followers to Orkney, he was seized, conveyed to Edinburgh, and hanged and quartered on the 21st of May. He is represented by his partizans as a demi-god, and by his enemies as a monster. Of course he was neither; but, by comparing the two versions together, it is not difficult to form a proper conception of his character. He was the Napoleon of Scotland. Like him, indomitable in resolution—masterly in tactics—the idol of

his soldiers—fond of sudden strokes of strategy—always sure to alarm and astonish, even when he failed to conquer—impatient of repose, and full of stern self-sufficiency and contempt for all meaner men. Like him, too, his heart seems to have been originally good and tender; but like him, unfortunately, he was unscrupulous in his means, hasty in his temper, careless of life, and not averse to dark plots and intrigues. His course was brief and bright; but the brightness was that of a blood-red comet crossing the shuddering midnight, and not of a calm and steady star. His death was heroic and manly, although not more so than that of his rival, Argyle, and of many others in the same dreadful period. He did, after all, nothing—ripened nothing—retarded nothing—wrought no deliverance on the earth; and it is best to look at him through the medium of the novels and ballads of which he is the hero, for it was never more true of any than of the "Great Marquis," that

> "He left a name at which the world grew pale,
> To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

Before the field of Philiphaugh, Charles had lost the decisive battle of Naseby, and in the following spring he betook himself to the north of England, where the covenanting troops were stationed. His motives were obvious. He hated the Covenant much, but he hated and feared Cromwell more. He knew, and wished to take advantage of, the jealousies that were gathering between the Scotch covenanters and the English independents. He threw himself, therefore, into the arms of the former, and was cordially received. They on their side were becoming apprehensive of the growing power of Cromwell. They had no need of Lesslie to testify of the genius and prowess he had witnessed when fighting by his side at Naseby, and which had dwindled him into insignificance. They felt as all men do, instinctively, the approach of the great man of their age—heard the "far shoutings which tell a monarch comes," and confessed it by the fears which mingled with the welcome they gave to their unfortunate

king. They engaged to support him on their own terms, namely, that he should dismiss his popishly-affected counsellors, and subscribe the Covenant. No doubt in this, on *their* principles, they were perfectly right. The wise among them knew enough of Charles to be certain that he was slippery, and must be bound; and what better bond had they at hand than the Covenant? But the king remembered, probably, his breach of other pledges and oaths, and perhaps saying in his heart, "the petition of right is nothing to the Solemn League and Covenant," persisted in refusing. In vain did Henderson enter into a conference with him at Newcastle, on the points of difference between prelacy and presbyterianism. The minds of both were made up beforehand; and although the collision of two flints produces fire, they are not melted, but remain flints still. From this unsatisfactory dispute the strong-hearted Henderson returned to Edinburgh to die, the prelatic party finding the cause of his death to be a mixture of chagrin and remorse in being defeated in argument by his majesty. Peace to his memory! He was a lion-hearted man of God, and we shall never pass the quiet kirk of Leuchars, standing on its gentle ascent, and looking eastward to the tower of St. Andrew's and the round sea, without blessing the name of the stout spirit who laboured there!

A transaction followed, which we do not profess fully to understand—the transference of Charles from the hands of the Scotch to that of the English insurgents. This was not, as many used to think, a sale; for, although money was paid to the Scotch, it was not for the value received in the person of the king, but in reluctant discharge of old arrears. Nor, although accompanied with stipulations for their sovereign's safety, can we believe that this transference was entirely dictated by anxiety for his interests or those of the country. We suspect the truth to be this: Charles they felt to be an unmanageable subject; like a hot cinder, to use a homely image, the sooner he passed out of their hands into others the better. He would give them no pledges, and as long as they harboured him, they were not

only in danger from his duplicity or obstinacy, but also from the parliament and the parliamentary army. Hence unwittingly they began to enact the scene in Scripture, "the adversary delivered him to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and he was cast into prison," from which, verily, he did not escape.

Then followed the rash "Engagement," projected by the Duke of Hamilton to save the king out of the hands of Cromwell. An engagement, which, as projected by malignants, was not approved of by the church, and which met with a disastrous issue at Preston, where the Scotch fled like sheep before the general's sword. It was the last effort in behalf of Charles. The army returned, flushed with victory. The parliament was purged. The Rump appointed a high court of justice. Charles was tried, condemned, and, on the 30th of January, 1649, executed. Cromwell, like Danton, afterwards, being determined to throw down to his enemies, "as gage of battle, the head of a king."

This was undoubtedly an imprudent, but still a sublime and significant, action. It was not Charles that suffered, it was the idea of divine right that was martyred there. Divine right has never recovered from that headsman's blow, which might be said to have resounded through the universe. Kings had been killed before for personal tyranny, and in hot warfare, but never till Charles did any suffer as a representative person—and never had the *class* before such cause to tremble. From that hour, the "touch me not," "the consecration," "the divinity," which had "hedged kings," vanished like a dream—even as the paternal qualities which at first led to their creation had vanished long before. The death of Louis XVI. was only a miserable echo—a contemptible mimicry of the grand and solemn scene at Whitehall. For why? The thing done once, needed no renewal. And besides, Louis was only an amiable imbecile, who had never even tried to reign. Charles had bent all the energies of a proud and powerful mind to be a king—nay, a tyrant—and had failed; and was this a fitting and a splendid example?

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And besides, again, the French regicides were on the whole ruffians. The English, however mistaken, were men with genius, and virtues alike gigantic.

Bold was the deed—boldly was it done—and boldly was it protested against. The Scotch, while glad to part from Charles, had no suspicion when they transferred him that he was to be put to death. They received the news with horror, and the next day proclaimed his son in his stead. In 1650, after preliminary negotiations, Charles II. landed at the mouth of Spey, having first pledged his word to sign the Covenant. It seems now at once ludicrous and disgusting that a man like Charles should ever have been a Covenanter. "He never said a foolish thing, and never did a wise one;" and, certainly, the most false and foolish thing he ever did was signing the Solemn League. We said, that Charles I. seemed made in contradiction to his father. Charles II., too, the express opposite of *his*. There was only one quality in common with the *three*, and that was falsehood—an element, which, indeed, has run like a current of scrofula through the blood of most kings. In James it wore a veil of *bonhommie;* in Charles I. of pride and outward shew of virtue. In Charles II. it was more deeply disguised, under light and careless manners. He was a villain, wearing at one time the cap and bells of a fool; at another, the masque of a comic actor; and, at a third, making his profligacy the cover for a deeper and more malignant wickedness. Belief, hope, virtue, enthusiasm, christianity, were words to him, and nothing more, he could syllable them deftly when it suited his purpose, but he had no belief in their existence, nor even in the reality of any other person's belief in them. This should be his epitaph, "He was the most profligate of men, and his profligacy was the best thing about him, at least, the most sincere. His very clinging to popery in death was a last trick, a clumsy attempt to cheat the devil, who was quite competent, however, to attend to his own interests."

It was impossible that such a man could get on well with the determined enthusiasm bordering on fanaticism,

of the Scottish Covenanters. He became what they willed his father not to become, a hot and very troublesome cinder in their grasp. Indeed, he seemed the evil genius of, the Covenant; and hence, at Dunbar, at the pointing of Cromwell's sword, "the Lord arose, and his enemies were scattered." Never was there a truer word than Cromwell's, "the Lord has delivered them into our hands." It was the story of Achan over again: there was a man of Belial in their camp—the accursed thing in his hands—and the weak divided interest, with all its props of prayer, sincere as that prayer was, sank before the energy of a hero "who moved altogether, if he moved at all:" and was great, because he could inspire thousands with his own spirit, and receive theirs into his bosom in return. Napoleon, in St. Helena, attributed much of his success to the fact, that he moved with the millions; and so, with a higher, holier purpose, did Cromwell. He moved with, nay, by throwing himself into, he became the concentrated spirit of, the real movement of his times; and hence his "strength was doubled, like Gabriel's, to trample his foes into mire," at Dunbar, and often besides.

Nevertheless, after the king, detained like Doeg the Edomite, before the Lord, had in vain attempted to escape from his covenanting partisans, he was crowned at Scone, on the 1st of January, 1651. A curious coronation! It was preceded by a very plain-spoken discourse, by Robert Douglas, who more than hinted the suspicions of Charles's sincerity which prevailed. After sermon, the king swore to the Covenants; and another oath to defend the church of Scotland, closed the solemn farce. Quarrels broke out almost immediately between the various parties who surrounded the king. These led to the famous schism between the resolutioners and protesters: the one party being favourable to the admission of malignants to fight with them against the common enemy, the other protesting against the employment of any but "God's saints." We are not apt to praise the narrower of two parties, but we think the protesters were, on the whole, right. They knew the wedge-like power of a united army—they had

felt it to their cost at the battle of Dunbar. They felt, that a host, however large, if composed of motley materials, and not animated by a unique enthusiasm, would either fall to pieces of itself or would be scattered like chaff before the fierce collected might of Cromwell's forces. They saw also more clearly into the character of Charles and his party; and, as they predicted, it came to pass. Charles made an irruption into England—he was pursued, and overtaken at Worcester by Cromwell, who gained a victory so complete, that it compelled Charles to seek shelter on the continent, and gave the victor the command of the three kingdoms.

It is amusing to read the accounts by the presbyterian writers of Cromwell's conduct in Scotland; they lavish every epithet of reproach on his head. They call him a "usurper!"—a "despot!"—"a dissembler!"—"a profane person!"—and give curious pictures of his soldiers carrying their swords with them into the pulpits, which they had scarce the decency to relinquish till their sermons were finished—and of his summary dissolution of the General Assembly. We think that Cromwell could hardly have acted otherwise. The ministers were his avowed enemies. They were ever and anon launching their thunderbolts against him. When he could not gain he was compelled to crush them. This he did with his usual mastery; and, on the whole, with sovereign good humour. His officers wished him to "pistol" Zachary Boyd, when he railed on him from the pulpit. He chose a "more excellent way," he invited him to his supper! What a subject for a great novelist—that supper of Old Noll's, with the author of the metrical version of the bible! It seemed a type of the conduct of the kings in most ages toward the clergy. They have, when not inclined to shoot, invited them to supper, and comparatively few have had the virtue to refuse.

During the rest of the protectorate, a series of wretched disputes continued to rage between the resolutioners and protesters, especially in reference to the tender, which was an acknowledgment of Cromwell's authority. Prominent

among those who took this, was the unfortunate James Sharp, afterwards archbishop of St. Andrews. James Guthrie was one of its bitterest opponents. Scotland, as a nation, however, was tolerably prosperous during Cromwell's reign ; and even the presbyterians are reluctantly compelled to admit that religion flourished, and none the less, it would seem, that no General Assembly was then permitted to meet. The ministers did their duty quietly, and, although constantly quarrelling with each other about the tender and the resolutions, their quarrels never assumed such virulence, or issued in such grave consequences, or were conducted on such a broad scale, as the meeting of an assembly would probably have led to. General synods sometimes become salutary safety-valves, sometimes add energy to principle, and act as checks to the encroachments of arbitrary power, but often too are useless or injurious ; and on the whole, those churches are in the best case which hold them least frequently, and find least for them to do.

At last, the great sun of Cromwell set, and "at one stride, came the dark" of Scotland. The church, during his reign, had not been paramount, but it had been peaceful, successful, and comparatively free. The state had been strong, victorious, and respected throughout the whole world. Scotland, a rough young colt, had found a rider who could guide it at his will—one who had bridled the war-horse of England, and tamed the wild wolf of Ireland herself. But all this was now to be changed. Charles II. had contracted deep arrears of hatred and contempt for the Covenanters, when in their hands, and he now took his own sure, though sluggish, method for discharging the debt. He never again visited Scotland, but its history, for many years, was the history of a series of his creatures, each rising above each in unfitness for their office — ignorance of the spirit and the heart of the country, subserviency to the king, cruelty, and personal worthlessness. Of these, Middleton was first ; and the packed parliament, to which he was commissioner, and which was popularly called by his name,

proceeded to pass one slavish act after another—an act of supremacy, making the king supreme judge in all matters civil and ecclesiastical; an oath of allegiance, which was meant for a seal upon this document of bondage, and an act rescissory, undoing all the reformatory deeds of former parliaments, including the Covenants, and annulling the authors of the parliaments themselves.

But something more was desiderated by these miserable governors. Not content with destroying acts of parliament, and with trampling on consciences, they began to thirst for blood. Argyle was their first victim. He was neither a very great nor a very brave man, but all his faults are forgotten when we remember the iniquity of his trial, and the christian courage of his end. Sir Walter Scott and Aytoun have both disgraced themselves by their treatment of Argyle. It was no "master fiend," who said, on his way to the scaffold, "I could die like a Roman, but choose rather to die like a christian." He had faults, but his greatest fault was his putting the crown on the head of the man who at last wrought his ruin. Guthrie, of Stirling—a zealous yet mild-tempered minister, who long before had "met the executioner of the city as he entered the west port to sign the Covenant," and read in this an omen of his future fate—suffered next. He died heroically, crying with his last breath, "the Covenants — the Covenants shall yet be Scotland's reviving!" These were the first rich drops for the young tiger of tyranny. He was yet to be sated and drenched with manly and christian blood.

Soon after, presbytery was, by an act of parliament, abolished, episcopacy reinstated, and the country half-tamed by fear, and half-drunk with the heady must of its raw, renewed loyalty, at first submitted. James Sharp, the minister of Crail had been sent to London to secure the preservation of the presbyterian government. There, however, he played a double game, writing letters to his constituents at home calculated to lull their suspicions asleep, while he was secretly promoting the designs of the episcopal church. Undoubtedly, what-

ever his motives might be, his secession from the covenanting interest, and his acceptance of the archbishopric of St. Andrews, were terrible blows to the cause, and his name has ever since, among presbyterians, been embalmed in the odour of infamy. The divided state of the Scottish church combined with his treachery to surrender the country, a powerless and palsied victim, into the hands of episcopacy. Sharp, Fairfoul, Hamilton, and Leighton, proceeded to London, were ordained bishops in Westminster Abbey, and returned in triumph; the three first-named making a public procession into Edinburgh. From the equivocal honour implied in this Leighton shrunk—whether from modesty, or disgust at his colleagues—on the day succeeding their entrance. Parliament passed an act restoring them to their former prerogatives—restored patronage in its fullest extent, and enacted that all persons in public trust should subscribe a declaration, renouncing the Covenants as unlawful and seditious. On the 29th of May, 1662, on the occasion of a public thanksgiving for the king's return, the Covenants were torn by the hands of the common hangman, and in Linlithgow they were burned amidst shouts of drunken mockery. The clergy were next commanded to attend diocesan meetings and to acknowledge the authority of the bishops; and to compel this, Middleton and a commissioner made a tour to the west of Scotland, where the spirit of the Covenant was strongest. In obedience to the recommendation of this commission, the council issued a proclamation, banishing all ministers from their parishes who had been admitted since 1649, unless they received a presentation from the bishop of the diocese before the 1st of November. The warning given was only that of a month, and the soldiers were commanded to pull the ministers from the pulpits if they should venture to preach contrary to their orders. Few expected the result which followed. Nearly four hundred ministers consented rather to resign their livings than to submit to the episcopal yoke. It was a sad yet sublime sight, to see these brave men, in the depth of winter, leaving their manses,

pleasantly situated among wooded nooks, amid green pastures, and by the side of still waters. They had made no preparation for the step. They threw themselves immediately on the care of the God who feeds the young lions and ravens in the wilderness. And, although to us they appear to have come out, not so much on a broad principle as on the paring of a principle, yet they deserve honour none the less for their honesty, determination, and faith. "Scotland," says Wodrow, "was never witness to such a Sabbath as the last on which those ministers preached; and I know no parallel to it save the 17th of August, or St. Bartholomew's day, to the presbyterians in England." It was a day of tears and bursts of irrepressible sorrow. The silencing of four hundred pulpits were even now a sad fact, but more so then, when in most parishes the pulpit was the only means of moral and intellectual instruction, when the kirk, standing in its quiet grave-yard, embosomed in its woodlands, or towering bare and clear upon its knoll, was the spiritual sun of the district.

To fill up their places, a whole army of raw recruits, principally from the north of Scotland, was brought into the field. These were the far-famed curates. A more contemptible class of men never assumed the clerical office. They were created by a process, which reminds one of the last conscriptions of Napoleon, when beardless boys were sublimated into soldiers; or rather of that immortal levy of Falstaff's, with which he shrank from marching through Coventry. It was even complained in the north, that all the herd-boys had become ministers, and that the cows were in jeopardy. Burnet paints them in colours which seem as true as they are stern, "as the dregs and refuse of the northern parts." Either debauched or stupid, or both, alike ignorant and imperious, they became objects of mingled contempt and hatred to the people. Even the martyrdom they occasionally endured, serves farther to make them ridiculous. They were not "stoned or sawn asunder, or burnt," but the doors of the churches were sometimes barricaded against them, and

the poor curate had to climb in at the window to his "ill-mumbled mass;" sometimes his boots were filled with ants; and sometimes women brought their children to church with them, and encouraged them to cry till the voice of the preacher was drowned in a storm-chorus from this infant choir.

And now, the ministers of the Covenant expelled, the curates imposed upon their reluctant charges, liberty in fetters, and tyranny riding rough-shod over the land, there commenced a series of persecutions on the part of the government, and of sufferings on the part of the presbyterian people of Scotland, to which history furnishes few parallels. This brings us to the period of the persecution, and to a new chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PERSECUTION TILL THE AFFAIR AT DRUMCLOG.

The Covenant might now be said to have completed its history. Once towering triumphant over three conquered lands, it was about to go down in an ocean of blood ; its name had become a jest, and its partisans were objects at one time of bitterest scorn, and anon of fiercest obloquy. Their evil day had fully come, and, although better times were yet to arrive, the full power and glory of their banner were never to return. There was never more to be a covenanting king, a covenanting parliament, or a covenanting nation. And, meanwhile, they must pay the penalty of their brief triumph. Sternly was it to be exacted, and manfully was it to be paid.

Many ejected ministers had the boldness to preach against the measures of government, some of whom were thrown into prison, and others compelled to seek refuge in foreign lands. The fate of Lord Warriston next attracted great sympathy. He had been an eminent Covenanter ; he was clerk to the assembly of Glasgow ; he had taken an active share in all public measures, particularly in the punishment of Montrose ; he had accepted an appointment, which gave offence to some of his weaker brethren, under Cromwell, and, after the restoration, had escaped to the continent. The vengeance of his enemies pursued him thither. He was surprised at his prayers, dragged on board a ship, and, notwithstanding the accumulated infirmities of age, conducted on foot, and bareheaded, from Leith to the Tolbooth of Edinburgh. Utterly broken down in body and spirit, feeble as a child in mind, he

moved the pity of his sternest judges, although it is said that Sharp and the other bishops treated his superannuation with shouts of brutal laughter. While his intellect was nearly gone, his piety remained. He submitted meekly to the sentence of the court, and calmly prepared for death. Hard as the hearts of hell must have been those which remained unmoved, as he tottered up the scaffold, supported by his friends, and died, with hands uplifted to heaven, and with the words, "Pray, pray; praise, praise," trembling on his tongue.

The people of the west and south began about this time those field-meetings, which were destined to become so famous. These assemblies at first were peaceable; no arms were worn, and when worship was over the congregations quietly dispersed. Peaceable, however, as they were, they gave offence to the bishops, who procured an act ordaining that all ministers preaching without the sanction of the bishops, should be punished for sedition, and that certain pains and penalties should be inflicted on those who absented themselves from their parish church. This act, popularly called the "Bishop's Drag-net," was necessarily inquisitorial, and led to incessant and most vexatious oppressions. Troops, under the command of Sir James Turner—a soldier of fortune, and the unscrupulous instrument the cause required—were poured into suspected parishes, and proceeded by every method to torment the people into obedience. Now they exacted large fines for non-attendance, and again, if these fines were not paid, they quartered themselves on the unfortunate recusants, devoured their food, sold their cattle, and reduced them to starvation. Sometimes they snatched the coats of men and the mantles of women from their shoulders. Indeed, every authentic account represents the soldiers of prelacy as detestable ruffians, uniting in themselves all those qualities of cruelty, recklessness, lust, blasphemy, and debauchery, which have in too many ages rendered the name of soldier a hissing and a byeword on the earth.

In 1664, a new and potent engine of oppression was invented. This was the high commission court,—a court

composed of bishops and laymen, endowed with almost absolute powers, and which served fiercely to stimulate persecuting zeal, and terribly to grind the face of the Covenanters. During the two years in which it "practised and prospered," it banished ministers, or put them in ward ; in typical anticipation of the butcher, Haynau, it publicly whipped women, and after branding and scourging boys shipped them off to Barbadoes as slaves. Worst of all, it made it sedition to give charity to the ejected ministers, so that if any of these had knocked at the door of one of his own parishioners, and sought a cup of cold water, or a piece of pease-meal bannock, the asking and the giving were alike a crime.

Next year the exactions in the west and south multiplied to such a degree, that fifty-thousand pounds Scots were raised in Ayrshire, in fines for nonconformity, and a much larger sum in the shires of Galloway and Dumfries. In 1666, occurred the rising, which issued in the rout of Pentland. This could not be justified in point of prudence, for there never was even a chance of success ; but it was a fair index to the state of public feeling, and showed that the wrong had become to many altogether intolerable. It was in this respect remarkable—unlike the risings of Scotland on most former occasions—that it began with simple countrymen. It was not excited by the gentry, nor the clergy, although some of them afterwards joined it ; it was originally the mere projection of the rugged horn of peasant power ; and the Scottish peasantry are not prone to become rebels.

The circumstances were these :—On Monday, the 12th of November, two or three fugitives had come down from the hills to a little village called the Clachan of Dalry, where were some of the soldiers of Sir James Turner. He was one of the most active of the persecutors, had been carrying matters with a high and a cruel hand against the recusant peasantry, and was then at Dumfries. The fugitives entered an alehouse, and were quietly eating their breakfast, when they were told that four soldiers had bound an old man, and were threatening to roast him on

a gridiron, because he would not pay the church fines. They rushed out, and tried to rescue him. A scuffle ensued —pistols were fired—swords drawn—wounds interchanged, and, in fine, the four were made prisoners. The news soon reached Balmaclellan, where a larger company of the Covenanters, feeling the contagion of the example, or fearing to be themselves involved, seized on sixteen of Sir James' men who were quartered in the neighbourhood. They were now too far committed to stop. They resolved to surprise Turner in Dumfries. For this purpose, they invited a meeting of the district at the kirk of Irongrey—a sweet spot, situated near the brink of the romantic Cluden, with the birth-place of Helen Walker, the prototype of Jeanie Deans, and the monument erected to her by Sir Walter Scott, standing beside, and with the beautiful copses and green hills of Galloway bounding the scene. Ere they could muster, the sun was up, and it was ten in the morning before they reached Dumfries. They amounted to fifty horse, and two hundred foot. They passed the bridge which leads from Galloway to Dumfries without opposition—found Turner in bed—admitted him to quarter, but set him, in his night-gown and night-cap, on the back of a horse, and took him to the cross of the town, where, to shew their loyalty, they drank the king's health. In the afternoon, they marched along with him and the other prisoners to the west, in a state of complete uncertainty, with regard to their future measures. Before they reached Lanark, considerable numbers had joined them, but no gentry or nobles. There they amounted it is said to three thousand, and if they had given battle to Dalziel, whose army was watching them on the other side of the river Clyde, they might have had the advantage, since their numbers were considerable, and since the first panic of their revolt had not yet subsided. Instead of this, after renewing the Covenant and issuing a defensive declaration, they marched toward the parish of Bathgate, amid a storm of wind and rain, which discouraged many and made them drop off, and thence to Collington, where they fixed a temporary encampment.

The enemy continuing to press on their rear, and the country around, either maintaining a sullen neutrality, or rising to resist them, they resolved on a retreat to Galloway again. One Colonel Wallace, a brave and experienced soldier, did all he could to keep them together, but hearing that Edinburgh was up in arms against them, they marched in disorder toward the Pentland hills. These rise about six miles to the south of Edinburgh, and from their rounded yet bold outline, reposing like massive blue clouds against the horizon, and the green vales which seem to have stolen into and to nestle in their midst, form a very interesting feature of the landscape. Thither, wearied with marching through winter roads, hungry and wet, "liker dying men, than men going to conquer," reduced to nine hundred, came this little host, and determined to make a last desperate stand. It was at a spot called Rullion Green, and on the 28th of November, 1666. The Covenanters were stationed on a little knoll. After waiting three hours for the troops of Dalziel, they at last came in sight almost simultaneously ; each army sent off a company of horse, which met in the midst, and the royal soldiers were compelled to flee. It is said that the Covenanters did not sufficiently follow up this advantage, else they might at least have secured a safe retreat. Larger forces, meanwhile, poured against them from both the enemy's wings, while only their left wing could be brought into action. On that side they fought vigorously, but in vain, their horses were not trained, they themselves were worn out ; their right wing was no sooner assailed than broken, and, just as the winter day was darkening down into night, the whole army fled. About fifty were killed, and about the same number were taken prisoners. The darkness of the night secured the escape of the rest. And thus was this unfortunate little rising, beginning in Galloway, and exciting a transient convulsion throughout Lanarkshire and a portion of the Lothians, within a fortnight, swallowed up, as if in a moment, and went down amid the defiles of the Pentlands, and the gloom of a November night.

Severe and summary was the punishment inflicted on the hapless prisoners. Although taken on the field of battle, and on terms of quarter, they were tried as traitors, and hung up in tens together ; their voice, as it proclaimed their innocence of the guilt of intended rebellion, being drowned amid the beating of drums. One of these sufferers is worthy of special remark, in himself, and as the prototype of MacBriar in Old Mortality—a character disfigured in some traits, but on the whole of surpassing power, beauty, and pathos. This was Hugh Mackail. He was a young minister of twenty-six—had travelled on the continent—possessed a liking for letters—amused himself in prison composing Latin verses, but was withal a zealous and fiery Covenanter. He was put to a species of torture equally cruel and clumsy, called the Boots. This instrument was composed of four pieces of narrow boards nailed together, into which when the leg was laid wedges were driven down with a hammer, mangling the limb, forcing out the marrow, and producing exquisite pain. Mackail bore it with great firmness, denied all knowledge of the existence of a conspiracy, and asserted that the rising of Pentland was altogether accidental. His appearance on the scaffold excited floods of tears from the spectators. There was not, says an eye-witness, "a dry eye in the whole street." He was so young, had been so popular, and was possessed of a hectic beauty which now seemed, from the composure of his mind and the magnanimity of his resolve, to be tinctured with the hues of heaven. The pale white cloud assumed a golden tinge as it approached the west. He went up the ladder, telling his fellow-sufferers that he felt every step of it a degree nearer heaven. And when he reached the summit, he burst out into the words, "Farewell, father and mother, friends and relations ! farewell, the world and all delights ! farewell, meat and drink ! farewell, sun, moon, and stars ! Welcome God and Father ! welcome sweet Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant ! welcome blessed Spirit of grace, the God of all consolation ! welcome glory ! welcome eternal life, and welcome death !" It was worth

a hundred poems. An apostle could not have left the stage of time with a firmer assurance, or with loftier language on his lips. With what true unconscious taste he makes the climax, not in glory, but in "death!"

In the west country similar executions took place, till the very hangman refused to act, and a prisoner had to be bribed and drugged into the degrading office. To crush still more completely the recusants, General Dalziel was sent westward with a body of troops. This man was of Binns, in West Lothian. He had been taken prisoner by Cromwell at Worcester, and confined in the Tower, whence he escaped to Russia, and became a general in the army of the czar, to whom he did good service in butchering Turks and Tartars. He had returned after the restoration, and was appointed commander-in-chief of the royal forces in Scotland. He had two crazes: one was that after the death of Charles I. he never shaved his beard, but allowed it to grow down, white and bushy, to his girdle; the other, that he bound himself to repair once or twice every year to London to kiss the hand of the king, when the singularity of his appearance generally drew crowds of boys after him. "Bearded like the pard," he was also "full of strange oaths," and "sudden and quick in quarrel." Hating the Covenanters with a perfect hatred—taught contempt for human life in the rude wars of Muscovy—fretted by the memory of past imprisonments, he became a monomaniac of murder, and his grisly beard flared like a meteor of wrath and fear over the west of Scotland. He was, Scott says, still more detested by the whigs than Claverhouse himself; and many anecdotes are extant to corroborate the truth of this statement. Once he shot a countryman who could give no information to him about the fugitives of Pentland! although the poor fellow besought him for one night's reprieve to "prepare for eternity"—a request which could be no sham in the mouth of a Covenanter. On another occasion he hanged a man for not telling where his father was. Upon another occasion still, he is said to have thrown a woman, who had declined to betray the retreat of a

pursued whig, into a hole in Kilmarnock filled with toads and reptiles, where she miserably died. But his favourite amusement was in putting lighted matches between the fingers of women, and compelling them to "peach" or to perish. His threats, according to Burnet, were even worse than his actions. He swore in his drunken moments that he would spit his enemies or roast them alive. A coarser Claverhouse, he scattered destruction over the westland shires, till the bolder of the whigs retired to caves or coal-pits; and the more timid returned to the prelatized churches again, till the curates triumphed, and the whole country sank into sullen slumber under the sword of martial-law.

Before this, Middleton had been supplanted in the administration by Rothes, and he was now succeeded by Lauderdale, under whose government, next year, (1667) there came a brief and precarious gleam of hope to the persecuted presbyterians. Lauderdale had been a Covenanter, and had become a courtier, but at first seemed indisposed to press matters to extremity. He disbanded the standing army—he proclaimed an indemnity to those who had fought at Rullion Green, on the condition of their signing a bond of peace. Turner was dismissed—Sharp was disgraced for proven duplicity; and there was even a rumour that the presbyterian ministers were to receive liberty to exercise their ministry independent of the bishops. Either the rumour was true that Lauderdale had at heart a leaning to his old party, or, more probably, the reaction of disgust which succeeds violence and crime had now arrived. The calm, however, was treacherous, and was soon broken by the report of a pistol. This was fired at Sharp by one Mitchell—a preacher—a Pentlander probably—a man partially insane, who with three bullets took his aim at the obnoxious archbishop as he entered his coach in Edinburgh. He failed in his object, but wounded Honeyman, Bishop of Orkney, and then walked back unmolested to his lodgings, changed his dress, and returned to the street, nor was he apprehended for six years afterwards. The crowd were not anxious for his

detection. They cried out when they heard that a man was killed, "Oh, its only a bishop," showing how profoundly they had become aware of the distinction between a reality and a sham—a dead surplice and a living skin. But this foolish action alarmed the government—led to an ineffectual search, and brought into trouble some of the more zealous Covenanters.

Several attempts to bring relief and unity to the unhappy land were next made, at short intervals of time. The first was the act called the Indulgence. This doleful measure, as it was afterwards called by its opponents, appointed again to their parishes those ousted ministers who had not been guilty of any breach of the peace, permitted them to meet in presbytery, but enjoined them to keep strictly to the bounds of their own parishes; put them under strict surveillance, and suspended over their heads severe punishments for any possible sedition, or any encouragement of future field-meetings. It was coupled with a formal statutory declaration of the supreme authority of the king in matters ecclesiastical. For this annexed erastian principle, as well as for the hampering confinements proposed, the majority of the ministers refused the benefit of the indulgence. A considerable number, however, accepted it; came back, like Poundtext, to their warm nests again, and made for a season such a harmonious concert of drowsy talking with the curates, that they were called "the king's curates," while the others were those of the bishops. We have not the heart strongly to condemn the men, who were tempted back from peat-haggs, coal-pits, dens by moaning river-sides, and exposure to famine and to fire, by a measure which seemed at least to relieve their consciences, as well as to restore their simple comforts—their little gardens and glebes—their low-roofed studies—their porridge and milk, or, on Sunday evenings, their temperate jug of ale; and above all, the undisturbed society of their parishioners and their families. But we honour infinitely more the sturdy children of God, who, for their notions of truth, rejected all this, and preferred the song of plovers, the

hiss of homeless streams, the peasant's hard bed, or the soft greensward under the gleaming midnight, and felt their souls severely satisfied with the companionship of

"Cloud, gorse, and whirlwind on the lonely moors."

The one class were men, the other rose to martyrs, heroes, and confessors. They had a principle, although not a broad one, and they kept by it; and it is principle alone that can give sanctity to life, dignity to endurance, body to the spirit of enthusiasm or true sublimity to death.

The indulgence was issued in 1669. In 1670, another plan was attempted. A deputation, who were popularly denominated the "Bishop's Evangelists," were sent to the west for the purpose of conciliating the people. This was a scheme of the excellent Leighton, Bishop of Dunblane. He was one of the best, holiest, and mildest men of his time. His work on Peter remains a lasting monument of his fine genius—his Horatian elegance of taste—his evangelical unction, and his profound but gentle piety. Had all the bishops been like him, this history or any other of the sufferings of the Covenanters, had never been written. But he was not fitted for that rough age. He was too gentle, too fond of half measures—was, shall we call him? —a divine trimmer, and in his half measures was not seconded by his brethren. With him went several others, all obscure, with the exception of the notorious Gilbert Burnet, afterwards the clever, officious, gossiping, twaddling, bustling Bishop of Salisbury, also a trimmer, but not a divine one, who often seems hovering, like a bat, between truth and falsehood, light and darkness; neither an Arminian nor a Calvinist, but now the one, now the other, and now both; neither a thorough-going roundhead nor cavalier, presbyterian nor episcopalian, but for ever vaulting dexterously between pairs of steeds; and yet, on the whole, a worthy man, a credible historian, an eloquent preacher, an amusing writer, and one who, in his ecclesiastical capacity, plucked at least one brand from the burning whom he converted on his deathbed—the infamous Earl of Rochester.

This raid was not successful. The very peasantry were able to abash and confute the bishop and his coadjutors. The rough logic, ready wit, fearless honesty, and terrible sarcasm of the westland people, which were ninety years after to bear their full product in the strong peasant of Ayrshire—Robert Burns—were, even in their embryo, too much for the gracious Leighton, the adroit Burnet, not to speak of one James Aird, called "Bishop Leighton's ape," because he could imitate his shrug and grimace, but never more of him. So there was nothing for them but to return and report "no progress."

Still another scheme flashed on the benevolent eye of Leighton. This was the Accommodation; by which he meant an attempt to reconcile presbytery with a moderate episcopacy. According to this plan, presbyteries were to be held. The bishop was to be present; but to waive his veto on the proceedings, and to sit as a dumb moderator in their assemblies. To this the presbyterians objected on various grounds. If the bishop had a right to sit, had he not also a right to speak? If he had no right to a negative, had he to a place in the assembly? If once seated there, was it likely that he would retain his silence? Did not his very appearance seem to ratify the prelatical claims? Was this not a snare for entrapping the Covenanters into an acknowledgment of episcopacy,—an attempt, by reconciling them to the presence, ultimately to reconcile them to the power, of a bishop? For these reasons, the negotiations were broken off, greatly to the chagrin of Burnet and the good Leighton, but much to Sharp's joy, who foresaw that now it would be "war to the knife," but foresaw not that the knife would speedily be applied to his own throat.

Field-meetings became every day more common; and were now attended by many who bore arms. This partly arose from the custom of those fierce times, but partly, also, from motives of self-defence. Such meetings were watched by the government with peculiar jealousy. On occasion of one held near Dunfermline, a military officer, acting as a spy, was threatened, and had a pistol pre-

sented to his head. This led to edicts sternly prohibiting conventicles, and making the attendance of any preacher there a capital crime. Notwithstanding, they grew and multiplied, and for nearly ten years the authorities durst only proceed against those who frequented them by the occasional enaction of heavy fines. It is ennobling to think of the best of a nation worshipping God for years together, in the open air,—the Druids of the christian faith. Their psalms made the wilderness to rejoice, and mingled pleasingly with the bleating of sheep, the distant cry of eagles and ptarmigans, and the musical thunder of cataracts and streams; the radiant faces of their young men and maidens made the desert to blossom as the rose; the voice of their preachers became a wild melody, and seemed reverberated from the blue dome of the sky overhead; thousands of visages lightened or darkened, sweetened or stormed, as the preacher kindled with his theme, or melted under it; sometimes infants were baptised in the clear water that was rushing by; sometimes marriages were celebrated at these mountain-altars—God and nature giving away their children; and sometimes thousands communicated amid the wilderness, and at the close of the sacramental work sent up a strain of holy song, "like a steam of rich-distilled perfumes," heard afar on earth, heard farther still in heaven, and welcomed there as incense, or as the morning and evening sacrifice. Seldom, since Jesus trod the Galilean hills, has there been such worship in this world; the great sky was transfigured into a temple; every heart said, "How dreadful is this place!" and as the evening drew on, and still the services unweariedly continued, the stars rising over the mountain-tops seemed looking down in love on the scene and listening with interest to the tidings of great joy which were there by "Cameron thundered, or by Renwick poured in gentle stream." And even when a dark shadow of clouds gathered over the landscape, and when, like a grim spectre, the storm appeared above their heads, and

> "Lightning, like a wild bright beast
> Leaped from his thunder lair."

the softness of the scene was only lost in its sublimity, and every heart in the assembly felt that the God who was speaking was on their side, that that thunder echoed the deep protest of their consciences, and that that lightning was writing in its own burning hieroglyphics the wrongs of their country and faith!

So far all as yet was well. But fiercer elements began soon to mingle in and to embitter these peaceful and hallowed scenes. It could not be expected that the government could regard such meetings either with christian or with æsthetic eyes. It came at last to this alternative, either it must continue to wink at them, or it must dissolve them by doing justice to their demands, or it must wait its opportunity of dispersing them by force. Nor was this opportunity long in presenting itself. Sharp had continued extremely obnoxious to the presbyterians. Had he become mild and tolerant, his apostacy might have been forgotten, or at least been regarded with less aversion and disgust. But his conduct became more and more irritating to their feelings. To take one example. Mitchell, the poor monomaniac who had fired at him, was at last recognised at a funeral, and apprehended. It is said that since there was difficulty in identifying him as the assassin, Sharp promised him his life should he make a confession. This he did, and, after having been terribly tortured, was imprisoned on the Bass Rock. After some years' incarceration, he was again brought up for trial. He pleaded the promise of his life which he had received. It was denied by the lords of council and by Sharp that any such promise had been made or recorded, and Mitchell was condemned to death. When the council broke up, the records were examined, and there they found the act recorded, and with the signature of Lord Rothes! There was a talk of reprieving him, but the result was that, in the rough language of Lauderdale, he was sent to "glorify God in the Grassmarket,"—to be executed—on the 18th of January. The fate of this man, otherwise insignificant, was long resented, and it was soon bloodily avenged.

We come now to the tragedy of Magus Muir. This is

an open moor, or common, about three miles from St Andrews. The view from it is bare, but extensive, including the houses, spires, and colleges of that old city; its sandy links; the restless waters of its bay; the German ocean spreading out to the east; the sands of Angusshire on the northern coast; the hills of Fife to the south and west, and on the north-west the Law of Dundee, rising abruptly, and interrupting the prospect. For other purposes than view-hunting did twelve persons, on the 3rd of May, 1679, assemble on that dull moorland. Their object was to waylay and to chastise, or perhaps kill, one Carmichael, a subordinate, but active, tool of the prevalent tyranny, noted for harassing, fining, torturing, and imprisoning men, women, and children. At the head of this little party were two remarkable men, connected together by marriage, David Hackstoun, of Rathillet, and John Balfour, of Burly, or Kinloch. Both were Fife lairds, *i. e.* small proprietors. Hackstoun's estates lay a few miles westward from Magus Muir, in a green wooded, lovely vale, not far from Kilmany, the parish where Chalmers began first to mutter those thunders of eloquence which ultimately astonished the world. Balfour came from the banks of Loch Leven, where Queen Mary had been imprisoned, and where still they point out the ruins of his house, which are as bold and rugged as his own character. Both were brave men. Balfour, however, is generally characterised as a determined homicide, "few escaping that came into his hands," and with this his appearance corresponded, he being a little man, red-haired, with a squint, and a very fierce countenance. Hackstoun, the milder character, met with the worse fate; he was, as we shall afterwards see, executed at Edinburgh. Balfour, who had escaped to Holland, died at sea when returning home—returning, according to some accounts, with a commission from the Prince of Orange to re-enact Sharp's tragedy on all who continued to oppose the presbyterian cause, but, according to others, as a soldier in the Prince's army. Our readers cannot have forgot the delineation given by Scott of this extraordinary character; a delineation not probably

very flattering to the real person, but which we have always thought the most original in design and the most Shaksperian in execution of all Scott's portraits. There are no pictures in literature more thrillingly powerful, or which more lift the hair "from the skin to the ankles," than those of Burley toasting the dead Sharp in the inn; Burley asleep in the barn; Burley killing Bothwell at Drumclog; and, above all, Burley spurning the oak-tree from the mouth of his cave, and telling Morton to defend himself or die.

Such were the leaders of the party. Disappointed of Carmichael, they were apprized that Sharp himself was approaching in his carriage from Edinburgh. This seemed to them providential. They were seeking for the fox's cub, and here was the old fox himself. They probably knew that he had been in the capital on business adverse to their cause. Such at least was the fact. He had just procured the passing of a new proclamation against field-meetings, making it treason for any to be found there in arms; and is said to have intended the very next week a journey to London, to advise still severer measures. Sharp saw his foes approaching, and put his carriage to full speed. His daughter, Isabel, (afterwards married to Cunningham, of Barns, in Fife), was with him in the carriage. Mounted as the pursuers were, they soon gained on it, disarmed the servants, and ordered the old man to come out and to prepare for death. It was a shocking scene—the servants palsied with terror—the old man and his daughter clinging to the carriage, as to an ark of safety—the stern faces of twelve men, like the apostles of "God's vengeance," glaring in upon the wretched pair. Hackstoun, alone, half withdrawn from the scene (because he had had a personal dispute with the archbishop)—Burley's sword advanced, and quivering with homicidal eagerness—the broad landscape below, and the young sun of May above, watching the tragedy. Their victim refused to obey their orders, but, with the frantic earnestness of Morris, in Rob Roy, he poured out entreaties for his life. He would save their lives—he would give

them money — he would even lay down his title of bishop if they would but spare him. Their answer was ready: "we intend to take your life, not for hatred of your person, nor for prejudice you have done to us, but because you have been an avowed opposer of the gospel and kingdom of Christ, and a murderer of his saints, whose blood you have shed like water—thy money perish with thee!——mercy for thee! who never didst show mercy to others!" Also they made the name of murdered Mitchell ring in his ears. At last the wretched man left the carriage, but still refusing to prepare by prayer for his fate, clung on his knees to Hackstoun, whom he knew, and entreated him—an entreaty backed by the wild cries of his daughter—to save his life. It was in vain; Hackstoun refused to interfere, either for or against him. Another of the party pleaded for him to no purpose, and then the swords of Burley and the rest were plunged into his body, and he died pierced by wounds, each one of which might have let out a life. And all this was done in broad day-light, within three miles of his own home—and the twelve men left the moor unmolested; and not one of them was ever, for that action, put to death. Enough, surely, in such an age, to make many exclaim, "It is the judgment of God!"

Nevertheless, the deed was even then condemned loudly by the more moderate of the Covenanters. We have a severe, yet measured, sentence to pronounce. It was "a crime, and worse, a blunder." Although Sharp had been the persecution incarnate, it was clear that from his ashes another and a fiercer persecution would arise. Blood thus shed would become the seed of a hundred other persecutors. But while the principal persecutor, he was not the only one, and it was certain that his death would intensify the zeal of his associates. Besides, the man was defenceless, aged, taken at terrible odds, and was killed, clinging, as it were, to the horns of the altar of a daughter's tenderness and misery. "Oh, oh, 'twas foul" to see those silver hairs dabbled in blood — to see his home in the distance, sending perhaps its smoke forward

to meet him—and to hear the shrieks of parent and child, blended in one discordant wail, to which even the wild bay of St. Andrews, one might dream, would have listened in pity! But, at the same time, we must make much allowance for the distempered times—the oppression making wise men mad—the mistaken sense of duty evidently actuating at least some of the parties—the suddenness of the impulse—the greatness of Sharp's crimes, and the fact that he was taken "red handed," new from an act of cruel prospective persecution, and hastening on toward others. As for the man himself, the keenest advocates of the Scottish episcopal church are not much inclined to identify their cause with him, but have treated his character rather coldly. He seems to have been a man of respectable morality and tolerable attainments, although some of the presbyterians will have it that he was a "fornicator," a "murderer" of his own illegitimate child, and what, if a more venial, is rather a more probable offence, a pilferer of other men's sermons—the parent thus of a very numerous progeny of clerical thieves—but mean, double-minded, cruel, and all whose real glory, in after times, has probably been lent him by his figure seeming to stand in the painted window of a bloody death.

The times were savage, and there was not, on the side of either party, much regard to human life. But Woodrow and other presbyterian writers contend that assassination was never inculcated ere this at field-meetings; and that actions of this kind on the part of the persecuted, bore no proportion to the murders committed in "cold blood" by the persecutors, who had not the same excuse. Without stopping to criticise the term "cold blood," as if the blood of the assassin were not seven times hotter than that of the regular soldier, we must say, that we think much of the sympathy felt for Sharp arose from the fact that he was an archbishop. But is the blood of a pheasant more provocative of pity than that of a meaner fowl? And surely if there be a balance in such a matter as brutality, the cruel death of Sharp must

kick the beam if weighed against that of John Brown, the Ayrshire carrier.

The persecution now, as might have been expected, began to wax hotter and hotter. The death of Sharp furnished the government with a new and comprehensive test, to be applied to all suspected persons:—"Is Sharp's death murder or no?" If the person said yes, he was passed over—if no, he was laid in prison—if he remained silent, his silent thought was dug out into a quick treason. To Sharp, in the council and court, succeeded the celebrated advocate, Mackenzie, currently called the "Bluidye Mackenzie"—a harsh, imperious, and brow-beating lawyer—the Jeffries of Scotland; and in the field there soon after appeared the notorious Claverhouse.

Previously, what was called the "Highland host," an army of eight thousand barbarians from the Grampian mountains, had been quartered in the west, and had committed fearful ravages upon property, and outrages upon human life. To support these savages, and their successors in the miserable warfare, what was called "the Cess" was imposed. This, like the indulgence, served to divide the presbyterian party. Many paid it under protest. Others denounced the payment of it, as implicating them in the guilt of the purpose to which it was applied, and as expressing obedience to the tyrannical government by whom it was imposed. Those who refused to pay became of course the victims of a double share of the general persecution; and to stimulate that to its fiercest point, Claverhouse was dispatched and commissioned to lash those with scorpions, for whom the whips of Turner, Dalziel, and the Highland host were thought too merciful.

He was a man, on the whole, fitted for the office of gathering up the gleanings of a harvest-field of confiscation and blood. He was not one of those whose eyes, as has been said of Charles I.—

"Could bear to look on *torture*, but durst not look on *war*."

He was equal to both, and in both he had, sooner or

later, large experience. Having served abroad with distinction, he returned, in time, for the hideous work that was now allotted him in Scotland. He was, unquestionably, a soldier of skill, courage, and success; faithful too to the Stewart cause; but there the catalogue of his merits must end. He was cruel and heartless, even beyond those who preceded him in that "bad eminence." He seemed to exult and luxuriate in the wretched chase as well as in the spoils it procured him. "An orphan's curse," says Coleridge, "can drag to hell a spirit from on high." So, it is not easy to resist the curse of a country—and that curse is pre-eminently the curse of Clavers. Well, says Junius, "the people are often wrong in their opinions; in their *sentiments* they are never mistaken." And it were as wise to seek to alter the general sentiment about Nero, or Richard III. or George IV., as to whitewash the blood-stained reputation of Claverhouse. Let those who try it beware lest none should be found equally ready to defend *their* fame, however tarnished it should become, in the act of praising a brutal ruffian! Let his recorded deeds and general opinion, found, too, as fresh this hour in the rural districts of Scotland as ever it was, be his fitting monument. What generous sentiment did he ever utter? What good deed has ever been laid to his charge? Suppose the accusations made against him exaggerated, what is there to counterbalance them? Fidelity and courage, undoubtedly, he possessed, but so does a bull-dog, and what had he more? His face has been pleaded his vindication, and so has Nero's—and so, for aught we know, might be that of Judas himself. To us, as we saw it on the walls of the ancient castle of Glammis, it seemed precisely the proud, melancholy, haughty, self-centred visage, which we had imaged to ourselves, reflected back scowling from the many pools of presbyterian blood which he recklessly or malignantly shed.

In spite of his efforts, and the many proclamations which were issued against field-meetings, these continued to be held, and with greater audacity than ever. On the 29th of May, 1679, the day appointed to commemorate

the restoration of Charles II., a band of conventiclers, to the number of eighty men, led by Robert Hamilton, entered Rutherglen, a village near Glasgow, put out the bonfires kindled in honour of the day—burned at the cross all the acts which had been issued against the covenanted reformation—and published a declaration, condemning all the proceedings of government since the restoration. It was a bold act, had it been well seconded. As it was, its immediate result was the mission of Claverhouse to the west, at the head of a body of dragoons, with full powers to put down the rising. Sweeping along, at full speed, he reached Hamilton, where he surprised John King, chaplain of Lord Cardross, with fourteen others—seized, bound, and drove them before him, on his way to disperse a large field-meeting, which he heard was to assemble on sabbath morning, the 1st of June, at Loudon-hill. We know not if he wrote to his masters, "God willing," he would scatter them. But, certainly, God was *not* willing that this meeting should be so summarily dispersed. It must instead fight a battle—gain a victory—create a rising—and become memorable for evermore.

CHAPTER V.

THE BATTLES OF DRUMCLOG AND BOTHWELL BRIDGE, WITH THEIR RESULTS.

The country, around Drumclog, is a dreary, desolate mixture of muirs and quagmires—sullen brown and bright treacherous green alternating; with high but heavy fells above, and deep morasses and rough streams below. Loudon-hill stands up king of the desolation, looking down, however, upon the fair straths of Avon and of Clyde, and up, "with awful reverence prone," to *his* monarch on the east, the gigantic Tinto. In the heart of these dark wolds, there met, on sabbath morning, the 1st of June, a very singular assembly. It consisted of neighbouring presbyterian peasants, mingled, however, with fugitives from various parts of the country; some on horseback, and almost all armed. We recognise, in yonder stern-faced man, with broad blue bonnet, and red hair, seated like a pillar on his horse, and keeping his eye fixed upon the distant hill, John Balfour, of Burley, who has come hither from Loch Leven and Magus Muir, in search of safety. Near him is a taller man, of military appearance; it is Colonel Cleland. That tall thin man with the black hair is Hackstoun, and, beside him, you descry the portly form of Robert Hamilton,* who has retreated from the bonfire at Rutherglen, to these moors. The services of the day have commenced, and Douglas is denouncing the evils of tyranny, when, hark! a watchman, posted upon the neighbouring height, fires his carabine, and runs to-

* Of Preston, afterwards Sir Robert.

ward the meeting. The sign of danger is recognised—the preacher pauses—the armed men fall into position—and the women and the children retire to the rear. Burley, Cleland, and Hamilton, busy themselves in arranging their troops; so that when Claverhouse and his men cross Calder-hill they find the Covenanters posted to the utmost advantage, with a morass in front, a hill behind, the foot occupying the centre, and a company of horse on each of the flanks. Claverhouse sends a flag, summoning them to surrender. It is answered by a shout of defiance, and, after a short silence, the whole army break out into the trumpet-like psalm—

"In Judah's land God is well known,
His name's in Israel great;
In Salem is his tabernacle;
In Zion is his seat.

There, arrows of the bow he brake,
The shield, the sword, the war.
More glorious thou than hills of prey,
More excellent art far.

Those that were stout of heart are spoiled
They slept their sleep outright;
And none of those their hands did find
That were the men of might.

When thy rebuke, O Jacob's God
Had forth against them passed,
Their horses and their chariots both,
Were in a dead sleep cast."

How solemn and thrilling this old psalm of Israel, from a thousand strong voices, echoing through the wilderness, and sounding like the challenge of God among the everlasting hills!

Claverhouse and his men replied to it with a loud cheer, and rushed upon the morass. They were met by a close fire—staggered under it—returned to the charge, and made several desperate but unsuccessful attempts to cross

the bog. Failing in these, their leader next sent flanking parties to the right and the left. Cleland and Burley, who commanded upon the left, permitted the flanking party to cross the ditch, and then furiously assailed and cut them to pieces. At this moment there arrived John Nisbet, of Hardhill, one of the bravest of the Covenanters, who, himself a host, had been sent for in haste to his house, which was not far off, but was too late for the beginning of the fray. He cried out instantly, "Jump the ditch and charge the enemy." Burley and he led their men across and attacked the right flank at the same time that Hamilton and Hackstoun brought the main body into full action in front. Claverhouse bore their shock bravely, and performed, it is said, prodigies of valour, the boldest of the Covenanters bearing back from him, and some crying out, "he has the proof of lead—try him with silver or the cold steel." He might, perhaps, have redeemed the fortunes of the day, had not a countryman, with a pitch-fork, to use his own language, in his despatch, "made such an opening in my roan horse's belly, that his guts hung out half an ell, and yet he carried me off a mile." This threw his men into confusion, and it became a hopeless rout. Up Calder-hill, crestless, staggering on his mangled steed, surrounded by his men in the last state of disorder, and pursued by the Covenanting horse, rode the "man of blood." When he reached the village of Strathaven, the villagers rose and tried to cut off his retreat. He broke through them, however, leaving a dozen killed and wounded on the ground, and never rested till he reached Glasgow, whence he sent a letter, dated the 1st of June, although probably written after midnight, to the commander of the forces, giving a laconic and curious account of his defeat. He owns to having lost eight or ten men, besides wounded, of his company; but says that the dragoons lost many more. By comparing all accounts, the entire loss of the royal army in this memorable skirmish, must have been about forty or fifty, and that of the Covenanters amounted to at least a dozen. It was the first and the last battle ever lost by Claverhouse.

Claverhouse's watchword on that day had been, "no quarter," and had he succeeded a fearful butchery had stained the brown moors, and reddened the dull marshes of Loudon-hill. The Covenanters behaved with greater humanity. In spite of their general, Hamilton, who appears to have been a brave fanatic and pious fool, and who quoted Psalm CXXXIX. to sanction his meditated barbarity, they saved the lives of their prisoners. The same evening they marched to the town of Hamilton, the country rising *en masse* to join them; and the next day they made an imprudent sally into Glasgow, where they were easily repulsed, and compelled to retreat, and to set up their camp in Hamilton again. The dead they left on the streets of the city were denied burial, and otherwise brutally maltreated. But Claverhouse, satisfied with repelling the first assault, withdrew his troops to Edinburgh, and the insurgents entered Glasgow without opposition. The success at Drumclog had taken the Covenanters, as well as the country, by surprise, and it became soon evident that they were not equal to the crisis they had created. They had thousands pouring in to join their ranks, but these were, for the most part, undisciplined. They had some able officers, but no great leading mind. Hamilton we have just characterized. Burley was brave as a lion, "fierce as ten furies," and possessed, probably, of as much sagacity as courage; but there were doubts as to his religion, and the stain of Magus Muir, so vividly branded on his brow, rendered him unpopular with many. Hackstoun was gallant, but did not win his richest laurels till Bothwell Bridge. "Oh! for an hour of Cromwell!" must have been the exclamation of some in that motley host who had served at Marston or at Dunbar. There were, besides, too many clergy in the army then, who, not contented with exerting their due influence in preaching and exciting the courage of the warriors, carried their controversial spirit into council, and, as one of the party complains, "broke by their divisions this little army before it was broken by the enemy."

Discord had shed many of her apples amidst the

Covenanting host. But the principal points of controversy were connected with the "black indulgence," and the authority of the king. The question about the indulgence was not whether it was wrong—in this most of them were agreed—but whether it should be expressly condemned in a proclamation which they were preparing to justify their conduct. Hamilton, along with two ministers, Cargill and Douglas, carried, in opposition to the moderate party, that it should. They moved also a day of fasting; but as there was a difference of opinion about the reasons of the humiliation, it was never kept. The moderate party insisted that in their proclamations they should own the authority of the king; Hamilton and his faction were for ignoring the subject. Ultimately, a declaration was published at Glasgow, on the 13th of June, in which the king's authority was expressly asserted. But while such vain janglings, and the heart-burnings produced by them, were distracting the little camp, a cry from the east began to strengthen every day, "It comes." Monmouth had been summoned from England to take the command; and now he, Lord Livingstone, Claverhouse, and the fierce Dalziel, at the head of a large compact force, were marching slowly toward Hamilton to extinguish the rebellion.

This army is said to have been ten thousand strong—about double the number of the Covenanters. It was composed of some English regiments, the flower of Charles's army—of the Scottish Life-Guards, the chosen troops of Clavers, still smarting under the disgrace of Drumclog—of other Scottish regiments of regulars—a large body of cavalry, including many gentlemen-volunteers, and several strong parties of Highlanders, whose savage appearance, language, and arms, rendered them peculiarly terrible, many of whom had served in the "Highland host," and had then imbibed or communicated grudges, received or inflicted injuries, which were not likely to be forgotten, by them or by their enemies, in the coming battle. Monmouth was inclined to healing measures, and hence the slowness of his march westward. But the fiercer spirits around him were, no doubt, smelling the battle afar

off, anticipating a swift and summary vengeance, and perhaps sufficiently aware of the dissensions of the army of the Covenant to be certain that it was an easy prey.

Alas! for that doomed host! A fanatical imbecile at their head — eighteen squabbling ministers as their spiritual fathers—controversy raging in every rank—a panic, too, beginning to spread, and hundreds dropping off hourly to seek their homes, or to plunge into the moors—only a few men of remarkable conduct and courage among their officers, the rest, ministers, officers, and men, became a mere mob, agitated to and fro, like trees in the wind, by an *odium theologicum*, instead of being urged forward by one determination to conquer or to die—our wonder is, not that they were scattered, but that they made head for an hour before the foeman. Of all the satires written on the Covenanters, from Old Mortality downwards, none has been, by ten thousand degrees, so withering as that recorded by themselves on the field on the south-western side of Bothwell Bridge.

On Saturday the 21st of June, the royal forces were coming into sight, and still the disputes were waxing hotter and hotter. It had become not a camp, but a very large, confused, and angry congregational meeting, with dozens speaking at one time, and the president having left the chair. One was urging that all the places in the army should be declared vacant, and that officers should be harmoniously chosen; others introduced again the subject of the indulgence, which led to a fierce dispute, and to the withdrawal of Hamilton and some others of his party from the place of meeting. The only result of the disputes of this long summer day was, that a supplication should be presented to Monmouth, giving an account of their grievances, and craving an audience early on the morrow.

The morning of the 22nd of June at last dawned. It was a sabbath-day, precisely three weeks after the victory at Drumclog. Calm was the morning, and brightly did the sun shine on the rippling Clyde—the bulwarks of the old bridge—the moor edged with trees, on which the Cove-

nanters were encamped—the scarlet and blue colours of their banner, and on the advancing standards, parti-coloured uniforms, and glittering arms of the royal forces, which occupied the north-eastern side of the stream. A deputation had gone early that morning to Bothwell village, where the duke had spent the night, and had laid their supplication before him, which sought, among other things, for the free exercise of their religion—for a free parliament, and a free general assembly. The duke received them civilly, and heard them with patience, but refused to treat unless they first laid down their arms, and submitted to the mercy of the king. He wished them to return to their army, and send him back an answer in half an hour. They returned accordingly to their constituents—delivered their message—the disputes revived with tenfold fury—the half hour expired and all was over.

The position of the Covenanters was undoubtedly strong. They had between them and the enemy a long narrow bridge, well fortified, with a barricade in the midst, and with houses and thickets on the other side, which were crowded with defenders. The river on both sides of the bridge was fordable; but still, had efficient measures been taken, the passage might have been kept, and "Bothwell had been Bannockburn." But the palsy of fear united with the frenzy of faction to unman and distract them. While one strong party defended the bridge, the mass on the moor fluctuated to and fro, like the waves of the sea. Hackstoun led the men on the bridge; Burley and Captain Nisbet, with their foot and horse, were above it, and along the river-side. Lord Livingstone conducted the assault. For an hour the bridge was bravely defended. Hackstoun won himself honour by the energy and courage he displayed. As column after column rushed on, they were annihilated by the raking fire of the Covenanting guns. When another column attempted to cross the river, it was thrown into disorder by a well-directed fire from Burley's troops, staggered in the stream, and was forced to retreat. Had the main body but pushed on to support

these brave defenders! But they were too busily employed in listening to harangues. Even without their aid, the force on the bridge might have maintained its ground, had not its ammunition failed. Again and again they sent for supplies in vain. At last a barrel arrived, which, when opened, was found to be of raisins, instead of powder! We may well conceive the astonishment and rage, deepening into horror, if not blasphemy, of the whigs when the cask was opened. Nevertheless, they continued the struggle. Without ammunition, without a reserve, without hope, Claverhouse and Livingstone pressing in the front, and confusion fast dishevelling into a rout in the rear, they fought on, till overpowered by numbers and literally driven off the bridge. Then the main body became sensible, when too late, of the fatal mistake they had committed. In vain did some of the leaders try to rally them. The Lord had, in their own emphatic language, "delivered them into the enemy's hands!" Burley might well, as Scott describes him, lean on his sword, in resolute despair, as he contemplated the ruin before him. The controversialists, as might be expected, were miserable combatants. They yielded like snow to the charge of the life-guards. It now ceased to be a battle, and became a butchery. Claverhouse, burning for revenge, encouraged his men to every excess of cruelty. Twelve hundred men threw down their arms on the moor. They were stripped almost naked, and forced to lie down flat on the ground. If one raised his head for a moment he was instantly shot. About four hundred perished in all, some of whom had no arms, and had come to the camp merely to hear a sermon. The confused and routed mass rolled toward the town of Hamilton. Here Burley attempted a rally, and, shielded by the streets, might have kept the enemy at bay for a time, had not his sword-arm been broken by a shot. He is said to have exclaimed, "May the hand wither that fired that shot!" and to have sought for safety in flight. At Hamilton we part from this fearless man, who soon after found a refuge in Holland, and is said to have descendants there to this day. Peace to his memory! History preserves

the names of few sterner, stronger, and more ruggedly-determined men.

The victory was complete, and, but for Monmouth's interference, the carnage would have been frightful. Some of the officers talked of burning Glasgow, Hamilton, and the country around Bothwell; but the general rejected the proposal with indignation. Instead of this he issued a proclamation, promising pardon and indemnity to all tenants and sub-tenants who had been at Bothwell, provided they submitted themselves by a certain day. But before this was issued, innumerable barbarities had been committed by the parties of soldiers who were scouring the country; the borders were secured to prevent the escape of fugitives, and the prisoners on their way to Edinburgh were treated with revolting cruelty.

Rushing into Galloway Claverhouse far overstepped all others, and his commission besides, in acts of cruelty and annoyance. His memory, especially in the parishes of Carsephairn, Balmaclellan, and Glencairn, is that of a destroying angel. He made little distinction between those who had been at Bothwell, and those who had not. He seized on horses, plundered houses, and committed men, women, and children to imprisonment, when he did not doom them to death.

The prisoners in Edinburgh were now to be dealt with. The two ministers, King and Kidd, whom Claverhouse had seized, and whom the Covenanters had rescued at Drumclog, were put to death, although they had not been at Bothwell, and were merely passive spectators of the former battle. Five others who had no participation in the death of Sharp were taken to Magus Muir, executed, and hung in chains. Twelve hundred were huddled together in Greyfriars church-yard, with no covering but the sky, and no couch but the cold earth. Of these some died; others made their escape; others were set free on signing an obligation never to take arms against the king; and about two hundred and fifty-seven were expelled their country, and shipped for the island of Barbadoes, there to be sold as slaves. Of these two hundred were drowned in a storm

off the Orkneys, the captain having first secured his crew, and then shut the hatches upon the unhappy prisoners. The remainder were saved.

But the results of the battle of Bothwell Bridge were of a much more extensive and disastrous kind. It led to more severe and systematic oppression on the part of the government; it drove the persecuted into deeper seclusions than they had ever penetrated before; and it produced extravagances of sentiment, action, and language, which only barbarous treatment can excuse.

They now retired into remoter wildernesses, compared to which the moor of Loudon-hill was a champaign country. Sunless glens, dank morasses, where peat-water was the only drink; old forests, and the summits of hills, lonely and buried among the surrounding mountains; dark wooded and rocky dens by roaring cataracts; caves, the mouth of which was concealed by brush-wood or by rowan trees, and the roof and sides of which were dripping with a damp and unwholesome dew; such were the retreats into which Scotland's persecuted children were now compelled to carry their bibles and their swords. The wildernesses of Galloway, of Nithsdale, and of Ayrshire, were suddenly peopled with strange, wild-seeming, solitary men, with long grizzly beards, gaunt visages, eyes burning with the glow of earnestness—the grey gleam of the partition between enthusiasm and madness—all bearing little clasped bibles in their bosoms, and short, but true-tempered, shabbles by their sides. Sometimes they met in broad day-light for worship, but in numbers much less, and with spirits not nearly so buoyant, as on that sabbath morning at Drumclog. Now the precautions they took against surprise were much stricter, but at the same time their spirits were even prouder and more determined. They were like chafed lions or bears bereaved of their whelps. The language of their preachers had soared up into a wilder poetry, an austerer symphony, than before. One is reminded of the days of Israel's prophets; of Moses, wandering at the foot of the mount which he is yet to climb, in all the trembling pomp of a lonely mission, to the

feet of the fire-girt God ; of Elijah, in the cave, listening to the mighty wind, the earthquake, and the fire, which are gone before the Lord ; of Ezekiel, astonished upon the banks of Chebar, or gazing on the valley of dry bones ; of John the Baptist, feeding on his locusts and wild honey, in the midst of that great and terrible wilderness, and clad in his garment of camel's hair ; of Jesus himself, treading in majestic solitude the mountain of the Temptation, or wrestling with the adversary who encountered him there. Inferior, infinitely indeed, the inspiration issuing from these modern Eremites ; not to be named the plaids of those latter wanderers with the sheep-skins and goat-skins of the men of other days ; but in sufferings in solitude, and in deep-hearted earnestness, Cargill, Cameron, and Renwick, may be named even with that list of confessors, who inhabited " dens and caves of the earth, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented, of whom the world was not worthy."

Their worship was not unfrequently performed at night, under the canopy of Scotland's midnight heaven, with Orion on the south, shining in meek yet mighty rivalship with the Great Bear of the northern sky, with the Pleiades passing overhead like a star dissolving into its particles of glory—shall we rather say, like a little tremulous clump of diminished suns—with meteors shooting across the deep of the stars—with the wind wailing in its passage over a thousand moors—with streams mingling their many voices with its doleful melody—did these persecuted christians meet, and their hoarse psalm, and the loud deep voice of their preacher, did finely harmonize, and make up the full complement of those " voices of the night." And as the preacher warmed with the theme, and alluded to that brief gleam of victory which visited their cause at Drumclog, or bewailed the fatal bridge of Bothwell, fierce eyes became fiercer in the darkness ; their bibles were clasped with greater earnestness to their bosoms ; their hands unconsciously grasped their swords, and the whole congregation moved like the waves of a stormy sea, and swore, as it were, one deep silent oath, to avenge their

quarrel and the quarrel of their desert-inhabiting God. Few now comparatively the voices to sing their war-melody—"In Judah's land;" but rougher and deeper were their accents, and the psalm seemed now the cry of blood going up to heaven from the silent wilderness below, and through that starry desert above, which conducts, by its long and burning stages, to the throne of God.

Such exercise amid such scenes was sure to bewilder many, to exasperate others, and to madden not a few. Every one remembers how Scott has described the education of Brian, the hermit, the demon-sprung—how

> "The desert gave him visions wild
> Such as might suit the spectre's child"—

how the mist was woven into mysterious faces—how ghostly beings seemed to spring from the spray of the water-falls, and how at night the voices of wind and stream became unearthly prophesyings, or weird lamentations—how the sound

> "Of charging steeds careering fast
> Along Benharrow's shingly side,
> Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride,"

disturbed his slumber, and excited his frenzied imagination. And so, too, it was with the Cameronians. Alone with nature in its most rugged forms, haunted by those dreary hills which were at once their defence and their terror—stung by memories of past cruelty on the part of their enemies, and sometimes on their own side—emaciated by hunger, and reading perpetually of the marvels and miracles of a by-gone day—a gloomy giant-shape of superstition took possession of their souls. It was not in fairies "dancing their ringlets to the whistling wind," nor in the ghosts of the departed "revisiting the glimpses of the moon," that they so much believed, as in forms of the worship of awe, sterner and wilder and less indigenous to Scotland. They believed in magic, and in satanic agency. Their enemies were all sold to Satan. Claverhouse was proof against lead, and so was Dalziel.

Sharp had been a sorcerer, and fitly died on Magus Muir. It was magical power which arrested their career at Glasgow, and smote them with that ruinous panic at Bothwell. It was customary they said for drunken prelates to meet at midnight, and to drink the devil's health. They did not, however, ascribe everything to the devil. They too often made God another devil, and attributed to him every sudden, or surprising death that befell their persecutors. Sometimes, like Arius, their bowels gushed out. Again, their tongues swelled in their mouths till they could speak no more. Again, they were found lying with mouths gaping wide, and tongues hanging out, as if bit by the invisible ghost of a mad dog. A comrade runs one of them through the body, at the *very spot* where he had bound Mr. Cargill, and, with an oath too terrible to be repeated by us, he expires. Sometimes, their bodies rotted away piecemeal, and sometimes the wine they were about to drink was turned into congealed blood. Such were the terrible myths which despair and solitude engendered between them in the Covenanting mind. To this class, too probably, belong many of the prophecies they incessantly ascribe to some of their more eminent ministers. Cameron, Cargill, Renwick, were all in the habit of predicting events which afterwards happened. Cargill, for instance, when threatened by Rothes with a violent death, said that, whatever his death might be, *he* should never live to see it; and on the very morning of the execution of Cargill, Rothes is said to have died in horror. Cameron, too, was endowed with the same power. To the laird of Logan he said, that he should be written childless, and to Horsecleugh, that he should suffer by burning, both of which afterwards came to pass! But the principal of those clear-seers was the famous Alexander Peden, a native of Ayrshire, and who, after many wanderings and imprisonment in the Bass Rock, and many hair-breadth escapes, at last died in his brother's bed. When forced to leave his pulpit, he laid an arrest upon it, "that none should enter it, except one that, like himself, came in by the door;" and accordingly it is said, that neither curate

nor indulged entered it till after the Revolution, when one of the presbyterian persuasion was appointed its minister. He prophecied, also, a great many cases of sudden and supernatural death. He joined the Pentland rising; but foreseeing its destruction, very prudently left it at the Clyde. On Bothwell's fatal day, he was forty miles off, and declined to preach, because the Lord's people were at that hour fleeing before their enemies at Hamilton, and their blood running like water. Such is a mere sample of the extraordinary stories about this man.

The devil, sometimes, they thought, assumed bodily form for the purpose of disturbing their assemblies. One story is curious. It is a tent-preaching, near a river—the people are rapt in attention to the minister—when lo! a tall black man is seen crossing the stream to join them. Suddenly his foot slips, he is carried down the current—he uproars for a rescue—the people rush in a body to the side of the stream—they throw him a rope—he seizes it, but, instead of his being pulled out, they are being pulled in, till the preacher cries out, "Let gae the rape—it's the enemy come to disturb our devotions—he may burn, but he winna drown—let gae the rape, I charge you." They obey him, and the detected and discomfited adversary goes down the river bellowing out his rage and disappointment. Many a time has this wild tale recurred to us, in our boyhood, when attending out-of-door preachings, in a field near thy lovely environs, O, dear village of Comrie! with the dark-green summer Grampians looking on around, with the sun of summer shining over head, and with the blue stream of the Earn rounding itself like an arm around the sacred spot, and seeming to linger near, and to warble out a low gurgling symphony with the spiritualities of the solemn scene; often have we there glanced an eye, half in fear, half in hope, around, in case, peradventure, the tall black stranger should be seen crossing the southern ford of the river. But he came not. May we not say, modifying an expression of Coleridge's,

"The terrible has vanished and returns not?"

The superstitions, whether lovely or fearful, of "puir auld Scotland," are, along with a great portion of its religion, for ever fled ; and what have we got in exchange ?

That all the cases of fulfilled prophecy on the part of the persecuted, and of sudden and disastrous death on that of the persecutors, were false in fact, or exaggerated in circumstances, we do not believe. We have a profound belief in *presentiment*, as a peculiar and, as yet, unanalyzed power in the human mind ; a power too susceptible of extraordinary stimulus and cultivation in extraordinary circumstances ; and such were those of the Covenanters.

"The glance of melancholy is a fearful gift."

The eye of the enthusiast is often not that of an owl, but of an eagle. And, like the eyes of clairvoyance, or of certain men in broad day-light, it often sees furthest when it seems most completely shut. These Cameronian ministers were stung into an intense and almost insane excitation and consciousness. They were, at the same time, travelled and learned men ; they were well acquainted with the circumstances and characters of their foes and of their friends ; and their sharpened knowledge and high-strung enthusiasm combined to form between them an insight, which, though unequal and intermitting, might rise at times to the borders of the prophetic and the divine. It is impossible to trace *all* the strange coincidences and fearful works recounted by the historians of the Covenanting times, either to fanaticism or to imposture. There is a residuum which such shallow theories will not account for, and cannot contain—a truth within all this exaggerated circumstance which we want a name at present to characterize, and a gauge, as yet, to try. But while granting this, we are none the less disposed to admit that many of the stories told, if not the majority, appear to our reason and our faith, as well as to our logical understanding, palpable falsehoods — serving no real end, teaching no real truth, tending to damage even then, and having much more since damaged, the real cause of the Covenant, and separated from

the miracles and predictions of early christianity by a great gulf—that, namely, of inferior evidence, an inferior occasion or *nodus*, and an inferior inspiration or *afflatus*, on the part of those who are said to have wrought or pronounced them. The occasion of the introduction of THE religion of the earth might have justified, and did, we believe, justify, the departure from ordinary laws; but not so the defence of this outpost, although important, of the presbyterian cause in Scotland.

To suppose that all these recorded wonders actually occurred involves many difficulties;—such as, why did so many occur within such a short period?—why were they not husbanded, as is God's wont, with severer economy?—why did they exceed in number all the miracles of Jesus and his apostles put together?—why were they almost entirely miracles of judgment?—and why did their rumour (unlike that of the miracles of Christ and the prophecies of John) not shake the world, and not even the paltry throne of Charles II.? But, on the other hand, to deny altogether the truth of those current traditions were to shatter the credit of history—to stamp insincerity and falsehood upon the character of those who had sacrificed their all for their cause; and to convert those mountain-altars, where a race of true, though over-excited, men worshipped, wrestled, fought, and died, into the stages of the coarsest of all histrionic lies, or else into the cells of the wildest of all maniacal delusions. Not for either of such unfortunate ends had these noble, though unbalanced, men, been led by God into the wilderness, or been told, in his unutterable voice, "to resist unto blood, striving against sin."

The offences or errors we have been partially explaining, or in some measure defending, belonged, more or less, to all the Covenanting party. But, apart from, and in dubious altitude above, even the followers of Richard Cameron, there arose a certain sect, called the Sweet Singers, or Gibbites—deriving their name from an insane sailor of Borrowstonness. This party made up for their smallness by the united intensity and perfect possession

of their absurd idea. Hearing perpetually of protests against all sorts of spiritual evils, they began to protest against all kinds of carnal calamities and resources too, nay, almost against life itself. They abandoned the stimulants of our modern life, abjured toll, custom, and tribute, nay, seated themselves on the Pentland hills, expecting not the Saviour from heaven, but simply that Edinburgh, the hated city, should sink into the flames, as their leader had predicted. By-and-bye, they gave up christianity too, burned their bibles, and became a species of mormonites. Their extravagances, as is generally the case, injured others more than their infatuated selves. They had nothing to lose, but their errors and absurdities cost a great deal to the general cause. Their folly and excesses were shorn off, and gratuitously transferred to those who shunned and, perhaps too much despised them.

The doings of the persecuted began, however, apart from this, to assume a certain fierce and troublous aspect. The light of their testimony was turned into blood. One Henry Hall, of Haughead, was apprehended at Queensferry, and a paper found on him was deemed treasonable in its expressions, and was, under the name of the Queensferry paper, quoted and used against all who were suspected of leaning to the Covenanting cause. A little afterwards, Cameron and Cargill broke off from their brethren, and published a declaration, denouncing Charles as a tyrant and usurper, and declaring war against him. And, following out this bold stroke with one bolder still, the same Donald Cargill, at Torwood—a place famous in the history of Wallace—after divine service was over, ventured to excommunicate and "deliver unto Satan" King Charles, the Duke of York, the Dukes of Monmouth, Lauderdale, and Rothes, General Dalziel, and Advocate Mackenzie. It was singular that Claverhouse was omitted, unless the worthy minister thought it needless to give one over to the devil who was so manifestly his already. Yet this binding of so many distinguished men into "a bundle for the burning," was itself a most significant sign of the times.

And now came the darkest hour of the Covenanting night. Statutes and proclamations were issued, compared to which the severest laws of the past were milk and honey. The government had now obtained a plausible pretext for putting the country under martial law. Letters of *intercommuning* were issued against those of the Covenanters who had made themselves obnoxious to government, prohibiting all, under the pain of death, from intercourse or communion with the proscribed. Whoever was suspected of such practices was dragged to the courts and strictly examined. Terrible, too, were those cross-questionings: there were not only ensnaring queries, but these were enforced by torture—by the horrible boots—the thumbikins—the application of lighted matches between the fingers—and by other devices, of a cruelty equally ingenious and infernal. Victims were insulted in court, and beaten with canes as they were mounting the scaffold. Children were hustled, beaten, and kicked, to get them to betray the wanderers. Women, guilty of nothing but absenting themselves from the curates, were used with unmanly brutality, and huddled up with she-murderers, as they went calm and prayerful to the scaffold. One grand test, was, "Will you say, God save the king?" Need we wonder, that many, smarting under their sufferings, or the memory of what their friends had suffered—remembering, that while their king was inhabiting a harem, they were immured in an earthly hell—believing him, moreover, to be a detestable deceiver—that they could not say, "Amen," when others said, "God bless him?" Near Wigton, water became an agent in their torturing hands, as fire had been long before. One Margaret Wilson, along with an aged woman, were bound to stakes planted in the sea within floodmark. The old woman speedily perished, but Margaret, while panting in the pangs of death, was pulled up, was asked if she would swear the abjuration oath, and, refusing, was thrust again into the water and drowned. This oath, which a woman of sixty-three, and another of eighteen,

refused to take, bound those who swore never to take arms against the king!

In 1684 another measure, still more cruel, was adopted. The common soldiers were empowered, without indictment or trial, to put to death suspicious persons, if they refused to take the oaths, or to answer the questions which they pressed upon them. Hence occurred the never-to-be-forgotten murder of John Brown, the Ayrshire carrier. This man lived at a house (still standing, we believe,) called Priesthill, in the parish of Muirkirk. It occupied an eminence commanding a wide and waste view of heath, mosses, and rocks. John Brown was an amiable and blameless man. He had taken no part in the risings or public testifyings of the times. His only crimes were, his non-attendance on the curate of the parish, and his occasionally retiring, with some like-minded, to a favourite ravine among the moors, where they spent the sabbath-day in praise and prayer. His wife was a noble spirit: blythe, leal-hearted, humorous even. While he, on the other hand, was gravely mild and sedate, her smile shone on him like sunshine on a dun hill-side, and transfigured him into gladness. His family was one of peace, although Isabel Weir was his second wife, and there were children of the first alive. All were wont to pour out, like blood from one heart, to meet him, when he was seen approaching on his pack-horse from his distant excursions. Latterly, as the persecution fell darker, and closed in around those Ayrshire wolds, John could no longer ply his trade; nay, was even compelled, occasionally, to leave his home, and spend days and nights in the remoter solitudes of the country. Nevertheless, his hour at last arrived. It was the 30th of April, 1685. John Brown had been at home, and unmolested for some time: he had risen early, and had performed family worship. The psalm sung was the twenty-seventh; and the chapter read the sixteenth of John; which closes with the remarkable words, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." His prayer was, as usual,

powerful and fervent; for, although he stuttered in common speech, he never stuttered in prayer: he could not but speak fluently in the dialect of heaven! He then went away alone to the hill to prepare some peat-ground. Meanwhile Claverhouse had come in late at night to Lesmalisgow, where a garrison was posted; had heard of John; had risen still earlier than his victim; and by six on that grey April morning had tracked him to the moss; had surrounded him with three troops of dragoons, and led him down to the door of his own house. With the dignity of Cincinnatus, leaving his plough in mid-furrow, John dropped his spade, and walked down, it is said, "rather like a leader than a captive." His wife was warned of their approach, and, with more than the heroism of an ancient Roman matron, with one boy in her arms, with a girl in her hand, and alas! with a child within her, Isabel Weir came calmly out to play her part in this frightful tragedy!

Claverhouse was no trifler. Short and sharp was he always in his brutal trade. He asked John at once why he did not attend the curate, and if he would pray for the king. John stated, in one distinct sentence, the usual Covenanting reasons. On hearing it, Claverhouse exclaimed, "Go to your knees, for you shall immediately die!" John complied, without remonstrance, and proceeded to pray, in terms so melting, and with such earnest supplication for his wife and their born and unborn children, that Claverhouse saw the hard eyes of his dragoons beginning to moisten, and their hands to tremble, and thrice interrupted him with volleys of blasphemy. When the prayer was ended, John turned round to his wife, reminded her that this was the day come of which he had told her when he first proposed marriage to her, and asked her if she was willing to part with him. "Heartily willing," was her reply. "This," he said, "is all I desire. I have nothing more now to do but to die." He then kissed her, and the children, and said, "May all purchased and promised blessings be multiplied unto you!" "No more

of this," roared out the savage, whose own iron heart this scene was threatening to move. "You six dragoons, there, fire on the fanatic!" They stood motionless, the prayer had quelled them. Fearing a mutiny, both among his soldiers and in his own breast, he snatched a pistol from his belt and shot the good man through the head. He fell, his brains spurted out, and his brave wife caught the shattered head in her lap. "What do you think of your husband, now?" howled the ruffian. "I aye thocht muckle o' him, Sir, but never sae muckle as I do this day." "I would think little to lay thee beside him," he answered. "If you were permitted, I doubt not you would; but how are ye to answer for this morning's wark." "To men, I can be answerable; and, as for God, I will take him in my own hands!" And, with these desperate words, he struck spurs to his horse, and led his dragoons away from the inglorious field. Meekly and calmly did this heroic and christian woman tie up her husband's head in a napkin, compose his body, cover it with her plaid—and not till these duties were discharged did she permit the pent-up current of her mighty grief to burst out, as she sate down beside the corpse and wept bitterly.

The tale has been told a hundred times; and, in any of its versions, is nothing more than a simple story. But though simple, it is pregnant with meaning. It casts a light, far around its blood-lit page, upon the character of those times. It proves that the rage of the persecutors had become insatiable, and sought, at last, not even the pretext or shadow of crime to justify its outrages. It sheds a pleasing ray upon the domestic life of the persecuted; and shews that their wrongs had never been able to render them regardless of common duties and household charities. John Brown and his wife are made to stand out from the deepest privacy; they are bathed, amid their moors, with the light that never was on sea or shore, and have become characters equally dear to the romantic imagination and to the christian heart. And it needed only this last instance of cold-blooded depravity to

add a conclusive hue of blackness to the character of him whom some would now exalt into a hero—"the chivalrous, gallant, and accomplished Claverhouse!"

Sometime previous to this, Richard Cameron and David Hackstoun had met their fate. Cameron was an eloquent, brave, pious, although a gloomy and one-sided man. He was born in Falkland, in Fife—he had spent some time in Holland—he became an ardent defender of the extreme measures adopted by some of the Covenanters; and after the battle of Bothwell Bridge, was pursued with peculiar inveteracy among the southern wilds. It had been predicted, it is said, on the day of his ordination by the minister who laid his hand on his head, that "that head should be lost for Christ's sake, and set up before sun and moon in the sight of the world." It was previously often laid on the lap of the heather, and often bared to the breeze, as he uttered his fearless field-harangues. He was the most powerful of the Covenanting preachers. His action was energetic, his voice thunder—thunder, the reverberations of which still linger in the west and south of Scotland; for from him proceeded the once numerous and still considerable sect of the Cameronians. He, with Hackstoun, and about sixty horse and foot, were abiding together in the Highlands, between Nithsdale and Ayrshire, when Bruce of Earshall came suddenly up and surprised them at a lonely spot called Airsmoss, where they were so hemmed in by bogs that their only chance lay in breaking through the ranks of the enemy, and dispersing themselves among the desert paths. Ere battle was joined, Cameron prayed aloud, commending the little company to the God of battles, and saying, twice or thrice, with peculiar emphasis, "Lord spare the green and take the ripe." Turning then to a brother who was beside him, he said, "This is the day I have longed for, and the death I have prayed for; this is the day I shall get the crown. Come, let us fight it out to the last." The party made a brave and brief resistance. The royal troops amounted to more than a hundred well armed and well horsed. After some manœuvring and skirmishing they

fronted each other face to face. The Cameronians, like the clan of Camerons afterwards, generally drew the first blood, and it was so at Airsmoss. Their horse fired first, and killed and wounded several. The enemy's fire, however, was more effectual; and Hackstoun finding the horse behind him broken, determined, if possible, to clear a way for himself, and for those of his party who durst follow. He dashed into the midst of the dragoons, pierced the foremost rank, and went out at the side, without the slightest injury. But his friends were unable to follow his example, and the foeman pursued him close. He rallied once and again, drove several of them back at the sword's point, and might have effected his escape had not his horse fallen into the bog. In a moment, however, he leaped from the saddle, and encountered in single fight his nearest enemy. While thus gallantly engaged, three horsemen came behind him, and he fell pierced with three hideous wounds in the back of the head. He was searched and carried to the rear. Although their leader was thus lost to them, the remnant of the Covenanters continued to fight like lions, till they could fight no more. None yielded, few fled, most of them were killed, or else wounded and taken prisoners. Noble Cameron met the death he had expected, and, beside his brother

"With his back to the field and his face to the foe,"

restored to God a spirit that had long "refused to bow to aught inferior to Him." His triumphant enemies, balked of the pleasure of taking him alive, and giving him a public ignominious death, wreaked their vulgar vengeance on his corpse—cut off his head and his hands, to accompany Hackstoun to Edinburgh, and buried his mutilated body, with those of the rest of the sufferers, under the sods of the glen. And then the roar of battle was hushed in the deep silence of the moss. The lonely place so shortly and bloodily disturbed, was left to the peasweep, the bee, and the fox; or shall we rather say to the spirits of the brave dead hovering over their corpses and over the ruins of

their cause, till the chariot should come to receive them up—that chariot described long years afterwards by the poet.

> "Its drivers were angels, on horses of whiteness,
> And its burning wheels turned upon axles of brightness."

And back rolled, meanwhile, the tide of the enemy's force, with Cameron's head, and Hackstoun's bleeding wounds, toward the capital of Scotland. A monument has since been erected at Airsmoss to the memory of Cameron. It was needless. The truest monument was the quiet spot itself, and his noblest mourner has been Alexander Peden, who once sat down on the grave, and with his head bare, and his eyes turned up to heaven, exclaimed, "*Oh! to be with Richie!*"

Hackstoun was not long in rejoining his friend. He was first brought to Lanark, before Dalziel, who threatened to roast him; then bound barbarously in the Tolbooth; and, in a day or two, he entered Edinburgh, sitting on a horse with his face backward, with three of his friends bound on a goad of iron, and with Cameron's head (and fingers uplifted as in prayer) carried on a halbert before him. He behaved then, as ever before and afterwards, with the most indomitable courage; and told the council, when he had been condemned, that "they were all murderers, and that oppression, perjury, and bloodshed, were to be found in their skirts." The particulars of his execution were even, beyond usual, horrible. First his right arm and left were cut off, next he was drawn up to the top of the gallows with a pulley, and suffered to fall down again with his whole weight, upon the lower scaffold, three times, and then fixed at the top of the gallows. Next, ere he was dead, his breast was opened with a large knife, and his heart pulled out, stuck upon a knife, held up to the crowd, while the executioner exclaimed, "This is the heart of a traitor," and, finally, thrown into a fire and consumed. His body, too, was quartered, and its four parts, after his head had been affixed to the Netherbow in Edinburgh, were distributed

to St. Andrews, to Burntisland, to Leith, and to Glasgow. And thus there passed away a gallant man, who, from his courage, constancy, and determined action in behalf of the cause he loved, has gained a nook of fame, and has soared up from the retired Fifan valley where his fathers lived, and where his descendants still cherish his memory and retain his faith, into the honours which attend a christian confessor. "It is fitting," says Burke, "that those who are made to suffer, should *suffer well*," and this was never more true of any than of David Hackstoun and the kindred spirits of his time.

The wide distribution of this heroic spirit of endurance has been sometimes made an argument against its sincerity, or at least its value. It is spoken of as a rage—an epidemic—but surely it was a noble rage, and an epidemic which could only have affected earnest natures. Coarser, no doubt, were the habits, and harder the frames, of our fathers, but who can imagine that they did not feel their tortures of body and of mind with intense acuteness? The fire produced precisely the same effects on their bodies as it would on ours; the gibbet hung in the same sable terrors before their eyes as it would to ours. Or, if they had greater robustness and less sensibility than we, the horrors they were called on to encounter were in Keats's fine thought, "portioned to a giant nerve," and were such, the very expectation of which would make us now expire. Many deaths were then condensed into one; and, to the essential bitterness of the cup of death, every conceivable element of insult and agony was added. Pride and wrath, indeed, could sustain the hand of the sufferer, as he lifted the thrice-drugged cup to his lips, or even drained the dregs; but only sublime enthusiasm and faith, could show him heaven and all its glories glassed on it, as on a mirror, and awaiting his coming when the pang was past and the spirit had soared away. There were abuses connected with martyrdom, and there might be counterfeit or maniac martyrs, but on the whole it was a glorious fact, darting a light down into the deepest abysses of our nature, and up into the highest

altitudes of our hope ; and not till this age has produced something second, or similar, let it dare to sneer at or underrate those "who came out of great tribulation, and who washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb."

The Duke of York had declared that, "there would never be peace in Scotland till the whole of the country south of the Forth was turned into a hunting-field." There appeared, for a season, some likelihood that his words were to be verified. In the years 1684 and 1685, which were called emphatically *killing time*, the military scoured the country, in every direction, in search of the fugitives. It was one great chase. Blood-hounds were employed to discover the retreats of the wanderers, and their deep-mouthed bellow, reverberated by the echoes of the glens and gullies, added another touch of the fearfully romantic to this unexampled persecution. It was as if a strange storm had enveloped all that chain of mountains, whence the Nith, the Dee, the Annan, and the Clyde have their source, while the rest of Scotland was gazing stupefied at the gathered gloom, and hearing the far-off echoes of its thunders. The "woman" was dwelling in the wilderness — but not alone — and if "nourished" there, it was with wormwood and with blood. Trial had long been abandoned — accusation, even, had now ceased. If a countryman was descried running or walking quickly across the fields, or found reading in the fields, it was enough, he must be a frightened rebel, a bible-reading fanatic, and was shot. Five wanderers were couching in a cave in the parish of Glencairn : their retreat was discovered : the soldiers came up, first fired into the cave, then rushing in brought them forth to execution, and, without asking a single question, put them to death. One man being observed to be still alive was thrust through the body as he lay. Raising himself up from his couch of blood, he cried out, with his last breath, "Though every hair of my head were a man, I would die all those deaths for Christ and his cause." How poor to this, though apparently imitated from it, the exclamation of Fergus

MacIvor, "Were all the blood of my ancestors in my veins, I were free to peril it in this quarrel."

Thus environed on every side, many of the Cameronians perished; but many also met with remarkable escapes. "Wonderful," says honest Woodrow, "were the preservations of the persecuted about this time. The soldiers frequently got their clothes and cloaks, and yet missed themselves. They would have gone by the mouths of the caves and dens in which they were lurking, and the dogs would snook and smell about the stones under which they were hid, and yet they remained undiscovered." Once only, after Bothwell, besides Airsmoss, was there an actual skirmish, although there must have been many individual encounters. There is a steep pass in Dumfriesshire, called Enterkin, winding between green hills above and a sheer profound precipice below. It is a misty morning, and along the half-seen path a company of dragoons, carrying with them to Edinburgh nine prisoners, bound on horses, are sounding on slowly their dim and perilous way. Suddenly, a voice is heard from the hill above. The commanding officer exclaims, "Who are ye—and what do you want?" In reply, twelve men step forward through the mist, which seems to dispart like a curtain, and, from a height surmounting the pass, their leader cries, "Sir, will ye deliver up our minister?"—telling his men, at the same time, to make ready! The officer, with an oath, refuses. The countryman, without another word, shoots him through the head, and his horse, frightened at his fall, rears back over the precipice, and is dashed to pieces. Eleven more shots are about to be fired, when the officer next in command seeks a parley, and offers to release the minister, saying to him, however, as he unbinds him from the chain, "You owe your life, Sir, to this d——d mountain." "Rather," replied he, "to the God who made the mountain." The rest of the prisoners are then demanded and obtained, and the cowed and crest-fallen troop is glad to pass on with their own worthless lives.

From the confused cloud of blood, which for those

years enwraps the history of Scotland, we mark out several prominent figures, distinguished at once in eminence of character and in severity of fate. Four should be particularly mentioned, who were involved in the consequences of the Rye-house plot; namely, Sir Hugh Campbell, of Cesnock, Sir Patrick Hume, of Polwart, and the Rev. William Carstairs, and Robert Baillie, of Jerviswood. This last, in point of talents and accomplishments, as well as in gentleness of manners and amiability of character, was perhaps, the first man in Scotland. Dr. Owen himself, a theological giant, and accustomed to the society of his kindred, was yet prodigiously struck with Baillie, whom he met in London, and said of him to a friend, "You have truly men of great spirits in Scotland: there is, for example, a gentleman, Mr. Baillie, of Jerviswood, a person of the greatest abilities I almost ever met with." His only counterbalancing crime was, he was an ardent lover of liberty and presbyterianism. In June, 1676, he had suffered from the enmity of Sharp. Having interfered in behalf of one Thirlston, who had been illegally arrested, he was summoned to the council, fined four hundred pounds, and kept four months in prison ere he was released. Afterwards he retired to England, and became involved in the great whig plot. To this step, he must have been urged by his experience of the evils of tory and popish tyranny in his native country. He was seized about the same time with Lord Russell and Algernon Sidney, but brought down to Scotland to undergo a more protracted punishment than they. He endured a long confinement, unrelieved by the presence of his wife, although she offered to be put in irons, as a security against any attempt on her part to promote his escape. He was next submitted to an expedient common in those times, that of a purgative oath. This, however, he refused to swear—and was, in consequence, fined nearly six thousand pounds. Although retained still in prison he, doubtless, thought that the bitterness of death was past. He was mistaken. After some months more of imprisonment in a loathsome

dungeon, where his strength wasted, and everything save his soul decayed, he was at last brought forth to trial, in his flannels, and with his sister waiting beside him with cordials to support his sinking frame. The court met at midnight, and, after sitting till nine in the morning, sentenced Baillie to be executed the same afternoon. The reason of this was—that very simple and Satanic one—they were afraid of being anticipated by a natural death. Like Lord Warriston, he had to be supported up the steps of the scaffold, his noble sister clinging to him to the last. The voice of this "great spirit of Scotland" was drowned in drums, but his last words were generally understood to be, "I go with rejoicing to the God of my life—to my portion and inheritance—to the husband of my soul. Come Lord."

Sir Patrick Hume, afterwards less creditably known from his connexion with Argyle's expedition, escaped from prison, and found refuge in the vault of his own family burying-ground, where his wife spread him a bed, and where the only light came from the presence of his daughter, who, stumbling over grave-stones, harassed by barking dogs, and obliged often to secrete food from the table (dropping, on one occasion, a sheep's head into her lap, and astounding the children by its unaccountable disappearance) nightly fed her father, not, indeed, like the Roman daughter, with her own milk, but certainly at the hazard of her own blood. It were a curious task, could it be fully accomplished, to describe or even enumerate all the places of refuge which the children of the Covenant found. What a panorama of linns—moss-haggs—caves where foxes and badgers were wont to abide—hollows of old immemorial trees—the northern sides of lofty precipices—the margins of lonely lakes, where thick woods overhung the waters—churchyards, and other haunted spots, where the fear of the dead repelled those who were thirsting for the blood of the living—coal-pits—hay-stacks—corn and clover-fields—garrets—ale-barrels—meal-chests—and beds, would pass before us, and could all, not only be realized to the

eye of fancy, but attested by the evidence of unquestionable facts! For evasive as electricity, subtle as the presence of flame, unquenchable as light itself, is a *chased principle*, a true enthusiasm, when hooted at, and hunted like a partridge on the mountains. Many waters cannot quench it; neither can the floods drown it. And thus, too, does a country receive a new meaning, and a nobler consecration. What has Scotland to shew better than the places hallowed by the memory of these her determined and disinterested sons? She has, it is true, fairy nooks of beauty, desolate tracts of magnificence, bold black mountains, long-spreading straths, and lakes of surpassing calm; but earth has a thousand such elsewhere, as worthy of our wonder. Mexico, California, Australia, Iceland, Siberia, the regions of Himalayeh, possess, in all probability, many mightier and richer attractions to the mere lover of scenery. But where the Wallace of Iceland? Where the Bruce of Mexico? Where the Hackstoun, the Balfour, the Cameron, and the Baillie of the great colonies of the southern hemisphere? Where the consecration and the poet's dream? Where the moral charm, such as, in the eye of Johnson, shed a softer colouring on the ruins of Iona than ever gleamed on the vale of Tempe, or on the palaces of Ind? We need not borrow the idea of the poet, that mind gives the charm to scenery, but we do say that spirit—the spirit of patriotism, courage, intellect, and religion combined—gives new beauty to nature—a beauty which can never wither—and stamps poetry and meaning and immortality on what otherwise were often a cold and dead and barren page. And this charm, we boldly assert, belongs to every spot where these true-hearted Covenanters wrestled, or prayed, or suffered, or wandered, or died. Their very crimes have shed a strange lustre upon the scenes where they were committed, and Magus Muir is as interesting to many as the meek graves of the martyred in dim glen or distant shaw,—

> "Where Cameron's sword and his bible are seen
> Engraved on the stone where the heather grows green."

There is one spot, very remarkable in itself, to which

the touch of the feet of these men has added a deep supplemental interest ; we mean the Bass Rock !* Who that has ever sailed up the superb Frith of Forth, or looked abroad from the Calton Hill or Arthur's Seat, has failed to notice that mountain sunk in water, like a half-drowned hill of the deluge, bearing aloft so proudly its head, as of a veteran who has buffeted the wars of many stormy years, rising precipitously to its four hundred feet elevation above the sea, with the grey ocean murmuring out the subdued and hopeless rage of centuries against its inexpugnable foundations, with its one entrance on the south-west, its bare herbage, its ruined castle, the cave which cuts it through, like a deep wound, or a breach which the sea has been able to make but not to force, and the solan geese and innumerable other sea-fowl which clang continually around it in concert with the everlasting wail of the discomfited deep ? Amid all the striking points of that magnificent landscape,—the couchant lion of Arthur's Seat, the huge spire of old Edinburgh "throned on crags," and rising in irregular terraces toward the Castle, the finely-sloping Calton-hill, Salisbury Crags—that Giant's Causeway of Scotland—the blue Pentlands to the south, the green Ochils to the north, the Frith flowing between, as if to smooth the ancient wound which made the ridges two ; North Berwick Law rising to the east, and in the north-west the peaks of "Rob Roy's country," watching, as if with jealousy, their younger brethren, and carrying off the view and the fancy into the far Highlands—amid all this, there is no one object which more arrests the senses, stirs the imagination, and so stands out insulated and alone from the rest as that deserted and ancestral stone of ocean, called the Bass Rock. This rock was purchased by the crown, through the intervention of Lauderdale, from Sir Andrew Ramsay, of Abbotshall, then Provost of Edinburgh, at the price of £4000, with the avowed object of

* The reader will also find full and interesting details of the Bass Rock, with pictorial illustrations, in "The Footsteps of our Forefathers," by J. G. Miall. (London: A. Cockshaw.)

turning it into a prison for nonconforming presbyterians. It is almost the only prison which has seldom if ever enclosed guilt. The cries of innocence alone ever awakened its echoes. By a sublime alchemy of God, this rock, which might have become an abode of misery and of shame, has been changed into a hallowed spot, contesting the claims even of Iona, as one of the eyes of our Scottish isle; less venerable, indeed, in antiquity and in breadth of interest than it, but quite as exciting to the heart of the patriot and the christian. A great many of the Covenanters were confined at various times in the dungeons of the Bass. These were very unwholesome, full of stifling smoke, so that the prisoners had often to thrust out their heads at the windows for air. The rock, too, from its elevated exposure, was cold and damp. Hence the health of the prisoners suffered; many contracted diseases which lasted for life, and it was with considerable difficulty that some of them procured, on application, freedom to walk abroad through the island. There, however, by-and-bye, were a few seen wandering along the cliffs, looking around to the "melancholy main," or over to the Pentland ridge, where they or their friends had spent one dark winter-day in resisting unto death. Haggard the faces of these men, withered and wild their attire, unshorn their beards, there was no beauty about them why they should be desired, but the fire of earnestness was in their eyes, stern determination lay on their foreheads and lips, and as they paced the cliffs and listened to the everlasting surge below, noble thoughts and feelings crossed their souls, or burst out, ever and anon, in words of solemn converse, or in snatches of more solemn psalmody and praise. Thus they spent the day, and when the sun had dipped his orb behind the Lomonds of Fife, and the evening cast its shade over the landscape, and the ocean was deepening his voice into those cadences which he sings to the stars, they, without a murmur, returned to their dens, and lay down to dream of heaven and the martyr's crown. Had there been a Bunyan among them, what a yet nobler parable, what a diviner dream, than even the Pilgrim's Progress, might have

dawned upon that soul, as it slept to the rocking of the waves of the many-sounding sea.

There was no Bunyan, but there were some true and high hearts confined in the Bass Rock. There Robert Gillespie, noted for his field-preaching powers, spent several sad months. There Peden was confined for four years, and had leisure to contrast the free moors of Ayrshire with the restraints of this house of bondage, and, as he himself says, in a letter dated from the Bass, to "envy the very birds their freedom." Truly there is nothing more torturing to the heart of the imprisoned than to see others enjoying perfect liberty. It is as though the dungeons of hell were placed in sight of heaven. Thither Ross and Macgillan were brought from Cromarty and Ross-shire in the far north of Scotland. There sojourned for a short time Robert Trail, an able theologian and author, who lived long after to enjoy happier times. There was Alexander Shields, author of that once well-known book, The Hind let Loose, destined afterwards to die amid the groves and arbours of the West Indies. There the brave Blackadder was immured in his old age, and emerged only to die. And there, apart from the rest, denied all indulgence, never suffered to see the sea or the sun, James Mitchell, who had attempted the assassination of Sharp, spent a portion of his restless and half insane existence.

Such was the Bass—most romantic of prison-houses; and such was the tyrannous rage of the predominant party, which wrested a stronghold from the ocean, and converted it into an instrument in the hand of their compact and all-crushing oppression.

That oppression was now, however, about to undergo considerable modification. It was indeed high time. The persecution had now raged, with more or less intensity, for more than twenty years. It had, during that time, done wonders of evil. It had imprisoned thousands—it had banished thousands—it had killed thousands—it had turned the greater part of the south-west of Scotland into a field of human chase, and it seemed to be aiming

at the utter extermination of the Covenanting race, as the one last thing that could secure the establishment of episcopacy in the land. But now an event occurred which, while threatening at first to deepen the gloom, turned out to be the first ray of returning light. This was the death of Charles II. In February 1685, this merry monarch became for the first time in his life serious, as he felt death—the proverbial terror of kings—not slowly stealing, but rapidly rushing, upon him. He tried to hide the great and terrible fact from his eyes behind the shield of a wafer. He died a member of the "Holy Roman Catholic Church"—and much regretted by his mistresses. A sentence of his own will best express the relation in which he lived and died to Scotland. "I perceive," he said, "that Lauderdale has done a great many bad things against the people of Scotland; but I cannot find that he has acted in anything contrary to my interest." There is something in the cool nonchalant selfishness of this speech, that reaches the sublime. He died; and the heart of many a wanderer among the mosses and moors would have beat with thankfulness and with joy at the tidings, were it not that his successor was more hated and dreaded than himself, and that now, for the first time since the bloody Mary, an avowed papist had mounted the throne of the three kingdoms. But the wheel had reached the lowest point, and was about to revolve upwards. Scotland had "turned the low corner of the shortest day, and was going up to summer, ho!"

CHAPTER VI.

CLOSE OF THE PERSECUTION.

The country was all but entirely mastered. Most of the clergy were quietly chewing the cud of the indulgence. The Cameronians had lost their leaders. Cameron was sleeping in Airsmoss. Hackstoun's head was frowning from the Netherbow. Burley was in Holland. Peden was dying at Lorn, and "soon to be with Richie." Nisbet had been arrested in Fenwick, and was on his sure and rapid way to the Grassmarket. Cargill, years before (he it was who, when pursued, leaped the linn of Ericht, near Blairgowrie—a linn never, from that side, leaped before nor since—and who said, when reminded of his "good loup!" "Aye, but I took a long run to it—I ran a' the way frae Perth!)"* had been taken in Ayrshire, had had his feet bound under a horse's belly so tightly that the blood sprang, and had been executed in Edinburgh, while in the act of prayer. Renwick alone still lingered, like a ghost, among the wilds, pursued by bloodhounds—a high price upon his head—and meeting with hair-breadth escapes almost every day. The Scottish parliament proved itself, the while, more subservient than even the English to the purposes of James II., whom it accepted as king without even requiring him to take the coronation oath.

At this time, there shone a false anticipation of the real morning that was at hand. We allude to the unfortunate expedition of the Earl of Argyle. This gallant nobleman

* Fifteen miles.

—the son of the marquis who was executed in 1661—had been required as a councillor to take the Test: an oath enacted in 1681, binding the swearer to acknowledge the supremacy of the king in all civil and ecclesiastical matters, to renounce the Covenants, and on no account whatever to attempt any change in the government in church or state, and yet containing in it an acknowledgment of the true protestant religion as exhibited in the old Scots confession of 1567. This long, clumsy, self-contradictory oath, was swallowed, for the most part, very quietly. Argyle, however, took it with a reservation; and for so doing he was prosecuted by the Duke of York for high treason! After a trial, which was, from beginning to end, one malignant mockery, he was found guilty and committed to the castle of Edinburgh. Having too good reason to believe that York was seeking his life, and having been urged to this step by his friends, he made his escape in his "lacquey's livery clothes," carrying the train of his own step-daughter, Lady Sophia Lindsay. In his haste and confusion he dropt the train when passing the sentinel; but she, with admirable presence of mind, threw it in his face, with many reproaches of his carelessness, and so besmeared him that he was not recognised. Her carriage was in waiting; he mounted behind as a footman, and in passing through the streets dropt off, dived into a lane, and was lost to pursuit. He reached London, after many singular escapes and adventures, and thence passed over to Holland.

The tale of his expedition has been told so lately and so fully by Macaulay, that we need only mention its main incidents. On the 1st of May, 1685, Argyle (who was acting in conjunction with Monmouth) left Holland, with three ships and a considerable number of men, and in three days reached the Orkneys. From Orkney he steered westwards to the Hebrides, first to Islay, then to Tobermory, in Mull, and next to Cantyre, where he issued a proclamation which did little service to his cause. On the 11th of June, parliament passed an act of virtual attainder against that arch-traitor, Archibald Campbell,

sometime Earl of Argyle. At Tarbat he published an address to his clan, and was there joined by one thousand men under Sir Duncan Campbell. Here he modelled his little army into three regiments, and was for attacking Ballachen, his nearest foe, who had only six hundred, but was prevented by Sir John Cochrane, and Sir Patrick Hume, who were destined to be the drags and ruin of this unhappy rising. They decided that the Lowlands should be invaded, and every one knows how luckless the attempt was. At length, at Inchinan, the earl, attempting to escape in disguise, was made prisoner. He was brought to Glasgow, and thence, under a strong guard, to Edinburgh, and on the 20th of June was carried up the street, bound, and bareheaded—the hangman before him, and the horse-guards around and behind. He was considered condemned already; the farce of a trial was thus saved him, and an order from the king commanded instant death. He behaved with admirable courage and composure. He said, on the day he was to be led forth to die, that it was a happier day than that on which he had made his escape from the castle. He dined, took a short sweet siesta, as was his wont after it, went out calmly to the scaffold, kissed the maiden—the instrument of death—and said it was the sweetest maiden he ever kissed, and died with his hand uplifted, and the words, "Lord Jesus receive me into thy glory," trembling on his lips. This was on the 30th of June. On the 6th of July, Monmouth's army was destroyed, and thus the little gleam of apparent morning died away from both lands, almost simultaneously, and a thicker darkness than ever threatened to succeed.

And so for a season it was. The gaols in Edinburgh were already full to overflowing with prisoners. It was determined, therefore, even before the issue of Argyle's invasion was known, in preparation for the superfluity of captives, on which they confidently reckoned, to send many to Dunottar castle, in Kincardineshire. Here, as in the case of the wildernesses into which they chased the Covenanters, and the Bass Rock to which they elevated others, it would seem as if the persecutors had been pre-

destined to give that cause a romantic hue, and to identify it with the most striking features of Scotland's scenery. The earth had again and again helped the woman, but now the ocean must take its turn in encircling her with its ancient glory. An American writer speaks beautifully of nature coming in and environing great moral transactions with a portion of its own loveliness; so that Thermopylæ's scenery seems sternly to reflect Thermopylæ's deed; and the Alps to become the natural frontispiece to the heroic actions of William Tell. And, on the same principle, we claim the wild hills and seas of Scotland as a portion of the Covenanting glory, and as an argument in the strong plea that may be brought forward in behalf of the Covenanting cause. Insincere and ignoble men were not likely to have had such a background; or, if they had, it would have been a terrible rebuke behind them—have sunk them into insignificance or overwhelmed them with contempt. It is the correspondence between the principles maintained, the character of the men maintaining them, and the scenery which begirt them with its rugged smile, and received them as favourite children into its barren but true bosom, which has completed the diadem of beauty and of glory over the heads of our Covenanting heroes.

Dunottar castle lies near the pleasant town of Stonehaven, on the east coast of Scotland; a town about fifteen miles south of Aberdeen, and which commands a rare combination of beauties: rich wooded glens on the westward, and bold bare cliffs overhanging the ocean on the other side. On one of these cliffs are still to be seen the ruins of this celebrated castle. The cliff is not so high as many others upon that bluff and rocky coast, which, all along from Arbroath to Slaine's castle, seems, as from the bosses of a mighty buckler, to repel the assaults of the sea. The ruins, however, stand out strongly, ocean-ward; and, in a storm, the effect of the sea breaking against their base must be sublime: as in all cases where unity and calmness meet and resist blind power and multitudinous fury. The writer once spent a night or two a

few miles to the south of Dunottar, in a house situated on the margin of that same sea; and will not soon forget, how, for many hours in a stormy November night, he lay awake in bed, listening to the surges which were dashing their large volumes upon the shore, and whose growl, as they receded, seemed that of a wilderness of lions in full retreat.

As if to lay in the German Ocean the spirit of the Covenant, one hundred and sixty-seven prisoners were, after they had refused to take the oath of supremacy, bound; driven like cattle across Fife; landed at the ferry at Dundee; forced to continue their ignominious march down the sands of the Angus coast; and, at last, thrust promiscuously into a dark vault in Dunottar castle. There they found their feet fast in the mire. There was only one window opening to the sea. The mire was soon supplanted and displaced—horrible to relate—by their own excrements! In this situation they were pent up the whole summer. Many died of disease. The keepers behaved most barbarously. Twenty-five of the prisoners made their escape down the rocks; but of these fifteen were betrayed by the people of the neighbourhood, were again apprehended and subjected to cruel tortures. They were bound on a form, and a fiery match was placed between every finger—six soldiers waiting to renew the matches. Some of them died, and the fingers of others were reduced to ashes! This is altogether a gloomier tale than that of the Bass Rock. The one is a tale of dignified and modified endurance; the other, of unmitigated and disgusting horror. Fancy loves almost to see the pious prisoners pacing their ocean-pinnacle; but imagination shivers as she conceives *this* mass of bruised mortality, writhing, shrieking, twisting itself within its narrow and loathsome limits, and the sea without seems uttering a hoarser and fiercer protest around the northern dungeon. It was reserved for our days, and for the enlightened government of the king of Naples, to supply a full parallel, in the treatment of its patriot-prisoners, to the most minute and disgusting particulars of the horrid impri-

sonment at Dunottar. Can we wonder that, even still, the sailor, storm-driven along the cliffs of the Kincardineshire coast, and the peasant returning late in autumn-eve from his labour, and hearing the night-boom of the sea, rising like the swell of some great accusing orator's breast and voice when he is growing up to the measure and the stature of his theme, should regard with awe the shattered ruins of this castle—should see divine judgment sitting, like a sated eagle, upon its darkening towers, and should mutter a prayer as they are hurrying past the dismantled den of legal murder and oppression?

Soon after this a change took place, which for a little opened up another flattering prospect to the presbyterians of Scotland. James, feeling already the insecurity of his tenure of power and the strength of the jealousy which his infatuated measures had provoked, determined at all hazards, to conciliate the dissenters. In 1687 he published various acts of "indulgence," professedly with the view of giving "liberty of conscience," and "allaying the heats and animosities among the several professors of the christian religion;" but which were generally and justly suspected of being entirely dictated by regard for the interests of popery and of papists. These indulgences increased and liberalised as they went on. First of all, they were extended only to "moderate presbyterians," and those who accepted them were strictly prohibited from attending barns, meeting-houses, or the fields, although permitted to assemble in their own private dwellings. In this form, none of the presbyterians accepted the boon. By-and-bye, however, larger concessions were made; till at last, in the July of that year, all penal laws for nonconformity were abolished, with the single exception of the acts prohibiting field-meetings. This had, to some extent, the effect of soothing the minds of a large portion of the Covenanters. The indulgence, in its first shape, had been little else than an insult to the presbyterians. For, while the catholics were permitted to build chapels and to carry the host in procession, and the quakers to assemble in public edifices, they were confined to

private houses, and their ministers were not permitted to preach without special license. But, in its ultimate form, the bait was widely swallowed. The Cameronians alone continued to stand out—saying, each one, in effect, *Timeo Danaos, et dona ferentes!*—rejecting the stream which had flowed from such a polluted source and clinging to their old mountain-worship. This fact brings our conception of their rugged heroism to a point. Here, at the close of a long day of defeat and carnage, we find them refusing quarter, and as determined as on the morning to conquer or to die. Here, too, we find another proof of that strange sagacity which distinguished them, no less than courage. From the height of their hills, these lonely birds of the wilderness were already smelling the great revolution that was approaching. Again and again had Nisbet and others, in their own wild way, predicted that the "God of the Covenant was soon to cut off the house of Stewart, and that none of that idolatrous house was to tyrannise in Britain any more." Many "burdens," in imitation of the ancient prophets, had these men flung against that dynasty—nor did the "curse come causeless," or fail of a speedy fulfilment.

"It is a curious fact," says MacRie the younger, when speaking of this particular time, "when it was neither darkness nor light," that the form of worship differed very little from that practised by the presbyterians. The prelatic clergy had no liturgy, no ceremonies, no surplices, no altar, no crossing in baptism. What is more remarkable, they had no confession of faith, no standard of doctrine or discipline, no rule to guide their practice, except the will of the bishops, which again was regulated by the will of the king. A more singular church, perhaps, never appeared on earth — it was neither popery, prelacy, nor presbytery, but a strange jumble of the three—the king being pope; the council the cardinals; the bishops moderators; and the dragoons of Dalziel and Claverhouse, as Mackenzie once called them, "ruling elders."

We come now to the last of the Covenanting martyrs.

James Guthrie had been the first minister who had suffered in the cause—James Renwick was the last. He may be called the Malachi among those modern minor prophets. He is described as a little fair-haired man, with a comely countenance, and great unction and sweetness of address. His letters, which are published, give evidence of learning, ardent piety, and something which verges on genius. In one of them, for instance, he speaks of the muirs and mosses of Scotland being *flowered* with martyrs. He speaks repeatedly of Luther in the loftiest terms, and seems quite familiar with his writings. His last letter closes thus, "I go to your God and my God. Death to me is as a bed to the weary." He had a singular history. When a child of two years old, he of his own accord tried to pray. Some years later he was tortured with doubts as to the being of a God. Once looking at the mountains surrounding Glencairn, in Nithsdale, the parish of his birth, he cried out, "If these were all devouring furnaces of burning brimstone, I would be content to go through them all to be assured that there was a God." These doubts passed away, and, like Chalmers at one period of his life, he seems to have passed some entire years in devout solitary contemplation of the works and being of a God. He was sent to the university, where he supported himself by teaching gentlemen's sons. In July, 1681, when only nineteen years of age, he saw David Cargill executed in Edinburgh; an event which sent him home a "sadder and wiser man." His mind was forthwith made up to connect himself with the extreme section of the Covenanters. After visiting Holland, and receiving license there to preach, he returned and added the weight of his youthful scholarship, ardour and eloquence, to the Cameronian cause. His preaching gave a new impulse to the fading energies of the party. His beautiful boyish appearance—the fire which shone on his eyes and cheeks—his "pleasant melting voice"—the "seraphic enlargement" of his speech, served to unite in him the charms of a bridegroom and the energies of an apostle. Peden and he were close friends. He spent two

memorable nights with John Brown, the Ayrshire carrier. One chill dark November night, a thin, travel-worn stranger entered John Brown's hut at Priesthill. His shoes were worn off his feet—his plaid hung dripping around him—John Brown himself was absent—the good wife looked at him with a certain suspicion, and it was left to her little daughter Janet to do as well as she could, the offices of hospitality to the uninvited and unexpected guest; yet so carefully did the child take off his plaid, and so tenderly place him in the corner next the fire, that the stranger burst into tears, and into a blessing on the "bairn." At this juncture Brown himself returned; he recognized Renwick, and a night of plaintive, yet joyous, talk and reminiscences succeeded. After a day and another night of the same mutual intercourse, refreshed and strengthened, he parted from John Brown to meet no more on earth, and went on his way. For years he led a wandering life, preaching whenever he could find an opportunity to the "puir hill folk." After the Sanquhar declaration against the authority of James, which he penned, he became the object of unmitigated persecution; a reward of one hundred pounds was offered for his head, and fifteen distinct searches were made for him. Once he escaped by throwing himself into a hole on the side of a hill which was protected from view by a heap of stones. His activity at this time was amazing. With all the rapidity of enthusiasm did he pass from parish to parish, baptizing, catechizing, preaching, protesting against King James and his July indulgence. Like that glorious monk in the "Roman," he became "a polyglot of prophets"—a "manifold infection" of earnest and solitary protest. At length his health began to fail, he could no longer mount or ride on horseback, and had to be carried to the place where he was to preach. Yet once there, recognizing an audience of the right kind, and feeling the fresh breeze of the mountain on his fevered forehead, he revived, he strengthened, he was enlarged, he poured out the emotions of his heart and the wrongs of his party in a very sea of eloquence, and the dying "boy," Renwick, was felt to be

inspired. In him soul triumphed over body, and seemed when it reached its climax, to lift up the frail frame in scorn, and to say, "what proportion between *this* instrument and *that* effect?" "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord."

At length, in February, 1688, having come to Edinburgh, he was discovered in the Castlehill by a tide-waiter who was searching for smuggled goods, and who stumbled on a nobler sort of contraband. He tried to escape at a back-door and fired a pistol which drove back his enemies, but in running down a street lost his hat, was recognized and secured. He was treated on the whole with marvellous lenity. The blood-suckers seemed weary of their work. They were, besides, deeply impressed by his youth and his appearance. A grim Burley, a dark Hackstoun, or a grey-haired Blackadder, would have found no favour in their eyes. But this delicate, beautiful, and brave youth they were very much inclined to spare. They would had he made the slightest concession. But his mind was made up. He seemed, also, weary of life, and speaks of being a "broken-hearted man." He was dying, too, at any rate, and perhaps wished to die with a public testimony upon his lips, and with Edinburgh and Scotland looking on. Perhaps, indeed, long wandering, and anxiety and sickness and solitude, had somewhat affected his fine mind. Nevertheless, at the justiciary, he behaved with uncommon courage and calmness; and his answers to his judges were sharp and ready in the extreme. When asked, for instance, if he had taught it to be unlawful to pay cess to his present majesty, he owned he had; and added, "Would it have been thought lawful for the Jews, in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, to have brought every one a coal to augment the flame of the furnace to devour the three children, if so they had been required by the tyrant?" He was found guilty, and condemned to execution on the following Friday. He was asked if he would like longer time, but seemed rather anxious than otherwise to be at the end of his journey. He was, however, reprieved for a few days, during which time he was visited both by

episcopalians and papists, who used every effort to move his resolution, and to induce him to petition for life, but in vain. Bishop Paterson was very kind, and left at last in grief that "such a pretty lad should be of such principles." An impudent popish priest, who had intruded on him, was repulsed with manly indignation, so that it became a proverb in the Tolbooth, "*Begone!* as Renwick said to the priests." With his mother and sisters, who were in the town, he held many and most affecting interviews. The fatal morning at last came, and Renwick bravely girded up his loins to meet it. When he heard the drums beating for the guard, he fell into an ecstasy, and said, "'Tis the welcome warning to my marriage—the bridegroom is coming—I am ready—I am ready." He was asked whether he would like a minister with him at the last, but declined, saying, "I want none with me but this one man," pointing to one of his friends. He went forth to the scaffold as he would have gone to a bridal—"as one in a transport of joy."

There seemed a presentiment in Edinburgh that this was to be the last of the martyrdoms, and that Renwick was to be the last of his noble kindred. His fame, too, had of late years been peculiarly blazed abroad, as one who was keeping alive the embers of Cameronianism by his single breath, and evading the keenest pursuit. Never, accordingly, had there been such a crowd assembled in the Grassmarket, as on that day. We can easily realize the scene. Faces, doubtless, were there, clad in the ghastly smiles of a triumph which was felt to be short—others looking on with stern, silent disapprobation and concentrated rage—some openly weeping, and protesting against the deed—and here and there flitting among the throng, the cloaked figures and disguised countenances of men, who, though in danger of the same doom, could not help venturing out from their hiding-places, to see their comrade or spiritual father die. But, whatever were the feelings or the words of the multitude, all was reduced to dumb show by the stormy music of the drums, which extinguished, so far as the people were concerned, the

last words of the martyr. Unappalled, he mounted the scaffold. He first sang Psalm CIII. and then read Revelations XIX.—a chapter describing the *avatar* of the avenger of christian blood, whose name is Faithful and True, and whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and which might well seem prophetic of the deliverance of the Scottish church which was at hand. He then prayed, and thousands who could not hear his words must have been deeply moved at the expression of his upturned countenance, which had become "like the face of an angel." It was the 18th of February, and clouds were darkening the sun, as he said, "I shall soon be above these clouds; then shall I enjoy Thee, and glorify Thee without interruption, or intermission, for ever." He next addressed the people, renewing his testimony against the various corruptions of the period. At the top of the ladder he prayed again, and at length expired with the words in his mouth, "Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth." He was just twenty-six years of age.

And thus had martyrdom borne its last pale flower, and the deep sigh of the multitude said, "It is done!" An era had passed away with that intrepid spirit, and a new time, less glorious indeed, but marked by less troubled and conflicting elements, was about to succeed.

Twenty-eight years of persecution had now revolved, and past all accurate calculation were the multitude who had suffered. Woodrow, with all his minuteness, is unable to tell the number. Defoe, in a stroke worthy and characteristic of himself, refers us to "the roll of their number kept under the altar and before the throne;" he might have added, where "white robes are given unto every one of them." Nearly twenty thousand, on a rough guess, seem to have perished by fire, or sword, or water, or the scaffold, or to have been banished abroad or to the northern islands Besides these, numbers without number expired of cold or hunger among the morasses of the country. It was as if some pestilence or "black death" had crossed the land, so great was the sacrifice of life, so intense had been the

excitement and terror, and so deep the desolation which was left behind. Excepting that of the Waldenses some time before, who had dyed the mountain-snows with their blood, there had been no such persecution in Europe; none so inveterate, so fierce, and so long continued, and had Milton been alive, he might have varied his sonnet and applied it to the heroic children of the famous Covenant.

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones.
Forget not; in thy book record their groans,
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold,
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. The moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant, that from these may grow
A hundred-fold, who, having learned Thy way
Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

The time was now fully come for the deliverance of these tormented realms. It was decreed, as in the case of Napoleon, that the evil king should become his own destroyer. Bothwell Bridge, Sedgemoor, and other battles, had only been heavings and rearings of the steed from which the rider must cast himself by act upon act of infatuated folly. These acts it is not our province to recount. Suffice it, that, after the Prince of Orange had reached our shores, and even before the news of James' final flight from Rochester to St. Germains had reached Scotland, Edinburgh had risen against its tyrants; all the regular troops had been withdrawn from the country to support the king against the Dutch, except one small force which, under the Duke of Gordon, occupied the castle of Edinburgh. Great riots and disturbances arose in the city. From assembling at night, the crowds ventured to meet in the broad light of day; they burned the pope in effigy; they clamoured

for a free parliament; they issued placards, setting a price on the heads of the leading ministers of state; and they so terrified poor Lord Perth, that he had to be protected by a strong body-guard to his own castle, Castle Drummond, in Strathearn, (which now looks down peacefully to its quiet lake, rich garden, and richer woodlands, while westward, the bold mountain, Turleum, in its turn, looks down upon the scene, and seems to claim it all as its own) but which was then a strong fort towering amid desolation, and lifting its bristling front in defiance to the gloomy Grampians on the north. No sooner had he reached this place of refuge than Edinburgh rose. The first object of assault was the palace of Holyrood. This had been turned into a Roman Catholic school and printing-house; it was now stormed, sacked, and well-nigh burned. Burley is introduced by Scott, in Old Mortality, as the leader of this rising, and as having there gained the third "notch" in his sword, when he clave the captain through steel and bone. But in fact, Burley was dead some time before. The work was well done without him. The palace was disembowelled of its papal contents; popish books, crucifixes, and pictures, were dragged out from the chapel, and were burned in the High Street. In the midst of this tumult the news arrived that James had fled. The members of council, with all the haste of cowardice, (how different from the spirit of Cameron and of Renwick!) proceeded to proclaim that all papists should be disarmed, and that protestants should be invited to assemble for the defence of their religion. Even before this proclamation appeared, Scotland was up from north to south in behalf of the Prince of Orange. It rose at one bound, like a palm-tree springing from pressure. Some Roman Catholic re-action took place in Nithsdale and Clydesdale, into which accordingly large troops of armed presbyterians were poured. The insurgents in these counties consisted partly of papists and partly of the fiercest of the Cameronians, whom circumstances had infuriated, and who, finding nothing said about the Covenant in William's declaration, concluded that he was little better than James. Formed of such motley

materials, it need not be wondered at that the insurrection was easily suppressed. Lord Perth found himself in danger even in his own frowning castle, and had to fly through the snow-covered Ochils to Burntisland, where he entered a ship, but was pursued, seized, and removed, amid the execrations and screams of the populace, to the castle of Stirling. Meanwhile, in London, William had had a meeting with the Scottish lords, who, after a consultation of several days, requested him to call a convention of the estates of Scotland, and, till then, to take on him the civil and military administration of the country.

The wicked and heartless men who had so long lorded it over Scotland were startled as from a drunken dream. Their power had dissolved in a moment, and they fell helpless from their seats. Had they been less submissive to the new government, there can be little doubt that they would have been torn in pieces by the indignant populace; but in their cowardice they found their safety. On March the 2nd, 1689, the convention met, and, after some slight opposition, decided that King James, by his abuse of power, had forfeited the crown, and declared the Prince and Princess of Orange to be King and Queen of Scotland. Presbytery was restored, episcopacy abolished, and, in the emphatic language of scripture, the "land rested from war."

There was now for a season something of a sabbath feeling pervading Scotland. The storms of a long night had passed, and

> "The morn was up again; the dewy morn,
> With breath all incense and with cheek all bloom,
> Chasing the clouds away with playful scorn,
> And living as if earth contained no tomb."

Scotland's reign of terror was over. People resumed their ordinary habits of industry. The moors became once more deserted and silent, save for a few hero-worshippers, who visited them for the purpose of erecting monuments to the dead who slumbered there. The churches were again crowded with congregations. The

hateful curates had fled, and many of the ejected pastors, who had once expected, when a better day should come, to be able simply to say with old Simeon, "Lord, now let thy servants depart in peace," and so to die, were reinstated in their parishes, and permitted to spend their closing years quietly among their original flocks. No summary revenge had been executed upon the persecutors. This, if the passions of some of the fiercer of the presbyterians demanded, the policy of William's government resolutely refused. To the general peace and contentment there were at that time only two opposing forces. The one was the unsatisfied spirit which existed among the Cameronians. That sect refused to conform to the revolution church, because the authority of the Covenants was not sufficiently recognised. In this they were doubtless honest, but some fell into the error of seeking on that account to form a junction with the remnant of the persecutors. Out of this projected alliance, however, nothing issued. One fortunate shot in the gorge of Killiecrankie put an end to it at once and for ever.

The other opposition was of greater consequence. Claverhouse, who had been long ere this created Viscount Dundee by King James, refused to own the authority of the new government: a fact which, we think, itself cuts off one plea commonly made in behalf of his character, namely, that he was the mere agent of others in his cruelties to the children of the Covenant. If so, how came it that he now alone stood out, and seemed determined to carry on a hopeless and barbarous struggle? The fact is, he had been a "master-fiend" in the bloody work; he felt now not only that his occupation was gone, but that he was a marked man, and must either surrender himself to the rage of the lowlands, or return amid the mountains and organize a new opposition to the government. He decided on the latter step, and carried his dragoons, reeking with the blood of the west, and clothed with the curses of tens of thousands in all parts of Scotland, to startle with their ribald songs and horrible blasphemies the echoes of the Grampians. There he was

joined by a portion of the clans, and his object undoubtedly was to re-enact the part of his relative, Montrose, by pouring down his troops into the low country, forming, if possible, a junction with the papists, the prelatists, and the exasperated few of the Cameronians in the south, and producing thus a formidable diversion in behalf of King James. Every one knows the result. He was met by General Mackay in the pass of Killiecrankie—that romantic glen where a lonely mountain-land seems to have thrown up entrenchments to secure itself against all invasion, and where the spirit of beauty, following after, has wreathed those rugged bastions with green loveliness, peopled them with the music of streams, and surprised them into involuntary smiles. The troops of Dundee charged, as they had done at Bothwell Bridge, and ever before and after, with prodigious impetuosity; Mackay's men were broken, and the rout would have been total, had not Dundee himself, at the third fire, reeled in his saddle and fallen. The hand which gave him his death-blow is to this hour unknown, and various fabulous rumours have floated about in consequence. Some say that he was shot by his own servant with a silver button!—others that one of his old Covenanting friends who had wrongs to avenge, had followed him to the braes of Killiecrankie and gained his object. But we find similar rumours whenever a cause is identified with one man, and when that man falls suddenly. It was so with Gustavus Adolphus—with Charles XII.—and many others. And had Napoleon dropped at Waterloo, there would have been afterwards cries of "Treachery—treachery!" Claverhouse, like Napoleon, while hated by many, seems always to have secured the attachment of his soldiers, and it is not likely that he owed his death to one of them. His time, in fact, had come—his fearful works were all accomplished—his war-saddle, long the throne of cruelty over the western and southern shires, must now become vacant; and, thank God! in Scotland, at least, he has had no successor. He was a brave bad man, and it was, perhaps, fitting that he should die in that

pass of peril—that Thermopylæ of the domain of northern darkness, and that

> "His mourners were the plaided Gael;
> His dirge the clamorous pibroch sung."

The Jacobite cause, for the time, died with him. He had been the soul and the body of this movement. His army melted away after his death, and the highlands and lowlands both submitted, with scarcely an exception, to the government of William.

It were exceeding our province to enter into either the civil or ecclesiastical history of the age succeeding this. The persecution might be said to close with Claverhouse, who seemed flung on the funeral pyre he had kindled, and the flames of which expired with him. Suffice it to notice, in reference to civil matters, that one act of barbarity, eclipsing even the cruelties of the past persecution, and dwindling Dunottar Castle itself in its flagrant circumstances, early tarnished the reputation of the whig dynasty. We refer to the massacre of Glencoe: an act which admits of little palliation, which, from its complicated and cold-blooded iniquity, ranks with those wicked deeds which may be called continental in their breadth and atrocity, and which, had it not been an exception to the general policy of William, might have been said to outweigh all the glories of his reign. This was not, however, let it be remembered, the action of the persecuted or the presbyterian church, but of the soldiers of the government, many of whom, besides, were actuated by the hatred of clanship, and its guilt should be divided between the crude government of a young and struggling dynasty, and the fierce blood which was then boiling in the hearts of highlandmen against each other. The highlanders of that day, might, indeed, be compared to the red spiders of the fields, which never can approach or see each other without a conflict; and the truth is nearly this, that, among all those complications of blood and treachery which then abounded, the massacre of Glencoe was the worst, and has become the most notorious.

As to the ecclesiastical state of the country, a decided improvement had taken place. The majority of the Scottish protestants had now got their will—their church was settled on the basis of presbyterian parity—their worship was restored to that elemental simplicity which still exists; but there were remaining many of the real roots of the evils which had been luxuriating for more than half a century in Scotland. We mention only two; the perplexed state of the law of patronage, and the grand fundamental error which underlies all the thought and all the effort of all parties at that period, namely this, that there is any possible plan of reconciling the claims of church and state, except by identification, a thing at present impossible, or by subjection, which is resisted by both, or by compromise and bargain, a game at which both have played for centuries, without coming to any satisfactory conclusion.

We cannot close this rapid view of the sufferings of the church of Scotland, without saying, that seldom do we find in history a nobler specimen of the resistance of principle to power than here. There was a great disproportion between the efforts made to suppress the Covenanting principle and that principle itself. *It*, in our view, was not sufficiently large; but, from the sincerity and tenacity with which it was held, from the severity with which it was persecuted, and from the resolution with which the sufferings were borne, it gathers around it both the air and the reality of grandeur. It sufficed to arouse the depths of the Scottish spirit. In no part of the history of that country, do we find a more marked, strenuous, and long-continued expression of the *pervervidum ingenium* of the land. The Scottish Covenanters were not great in prosperity—few parties are; but the alchemy of suffering brought out the rich qualities of self-denial, stubborn endurance, unlimited trust in divine aid, an unearthly eloquence, an insight scarcely inferior, a courage which never quailed, and an integrity which was never shaken. In the recollection of these distinguishing excellencies posterity may well forget the faults which,

unquestionably, they committed. Let us blend with admiration for their energy and zeal, sorrow that they effected not still more, and that their better spirit has in so great a measure departed.

"Men are we; and must grieve, when even the shade
Of that which once was great has passed away."

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE CHARACTER, LITERATURE, AIMS, AND ATTAINED OBJECTS, OF THE COVENANTERS.

To pass from a living story to an analysis may seem a cold and deep descent: still it is necessary to make it, and perhaps it may be so managed that whatever true sympathy has been excited by the memorial of the Covenanting deeds and sufferings, shall not be lost in an attempt to seek more minutely to contemplate the moral and intellectual qualities of the men.

The first and most prominent feature in their character, was *earnestness*. That they possessed this, is beyond all question. Earnestness is not, as some seem to imagine, a quality recently discovered, like Californian or Australian gold; it is as old as the heart of man, or the purposes and plans of Almighty God; and in the heroes of the Covenant we find it in all its strength, if not in all its purity. They were terribly in earnest. The passion which was in them, like all great passions, refused to be divided. Their idea possessed them with a force and a fulness to which we find few parallels in history. It haunted their sleep, it awoke with them in the morning—it walked, like their shadow, with them to business or to pleasure—it became the breath of their nostrils and the soul of their soul. Ever does such possession give consistency to character, elevation to feeling, nobility to endurance—shall we say?—sanctity to error. At least, the errors of earnest ecstacy are not to be weighed in the balance with the deliberate mistakes and voluntary madnesses of a false system. What a contrast between the Covenanters in their rugged devotedness, their almost insane since-

rity, and the occasional excesses into which they were hurried, and the society of the Jesuits, with their cold colossal faults, their systematic falsehood, the low arts which mingled with all their stupendous exertions, the dark veil which has hung around them in all their manifold and tortuous movements. The history of the Covenanters was a current of rapid volcanic fire ; that of the Jesuits has been the course of a glacier, cold, creeping, and carrying destruction with it wherever it has gone. The earnestness of our fathers was that of deep attachment to a cause, and that of the Jesuits, of devotion to a defeated and exposed sham. As they have sown, they have reaped. The Covenanters have passed away, but the liberties and religion of Scotland form their everlasting monument. The Jesuits remain ; but they walk in darkness ; they are tracked by suspicion, hatred, and terror, and now for a long time "their judgment lingereth not, and their damnation," as a party, "doth not slumber."

Much of the Covenanting spirit of devout earnestness is gone from the Scottish character ; but it is not yet too late to behold at least the skirts of its departing glory. The practice of tent-preaching which till lately prevailed, was one of the most striking of these remains. That this was sometimes abused we know from Burns' Holy Fair, as well as from other sources, to be an unquestionable fact ; but the abuse was almost entirely confined to the neighbourhood of great cities. At all events, amid the peaceful solitudes of Perthshire we never witnessed aught but what was reverent, interesting, and even imposing. The use of the tent was latterly confined to the summer sacrament.

It is a bright sabbath morning in the end of June, or the beginning of July—a little before eleven ; crowds are seen approaching from all directions to a tent made of wood, painted blue, and set in a field hard by the murmuring Earn, which a little below is joined by another mountain-stream. The scene around is magnificent To the west, stand up a chain of bold precipitous mountains, black in winter, but now in this summer-day

clothed with the freshest green which ferns and Alpine grasses can supply. On the south, beyond the river, a fertile plain expands till bounded at the distance of two miles by a lower ridge of hills, which close the valley and confine the prospect. Eastward, the river pursues its course towards some low wooded fells, through which it finds a narrow passage into that broader strath which extends to the Tay. On the north is the village, and behind it a glorious glen covered with woods and surmounted by a monumental pillar, which stands on a bare rock above them. The sun is warm, but a tree or two are near, under which some of the multitude find a shelter, and a cool breeze from the stream passes ever and anon across their countenances, and bedews them with delicious refreshment. The crowd is scarcely less interesting than the scenery. It is composed partly of the villagers and partly of farmers and country-folks. You see here the keen, hard-featured faces of weavers and shoemakers, and there the bluff and ruddy countenances of ploughmen. Not a few aged men are there, wearing broad blue bonnets over their silvery hairs. Some shepherd's plaids are to be seen ; and, here and there, you see a mountaineer wearing the kilt of his fathers. Old women are there, with round linen-caps instead of bonnets. Blooming virgins, too, abound, with modesty and beauty meeting together under the shadow of their simple head-gear. Children people the outskirts of the assembly, or sit on the dyke dividing the field from the river ; and lo ! there is one boy who is sitting apart from all the rest, and is musing with half-shut dreamy eye—with the shadow of a whole tree screening him from the summer-heat. Many of the multitude have come from distant parts of the country, over "muirs and mosses many," to join in the solemnities of the day ; *that* little company of men and women have risen early from the banks of Loch-Earn, have been first at the tent, and shall remain till the stars appear trembling over the Abruchill Hills. The service at last begins. The preacher mounts the tent. He is a man apparently of sixty and upwards—his hair is a sable, thickly silvered—his brow is

lofty, his face has once been almost handsome, and is still manly and bold; in stature he approaches six feet, and age has not yet prevailed to bend his erect figure. His eye is quick, eager, and restless; earnest simplicity pervades his whole aspect. He gives out the psalm in a clear strong voice, which rings afar "like a trumpet with a silver sound." The voice of the multitude then arises, swells, sinks, dies away; but how melodiously has it peopled the solitude and awakened the echoes of the hills! He prays, and his prayer is fervid and powerful. He announces as his text, "They spake of the decease that he was to accomplish at Jerusalem;" and straightway the minds of the large throng are transported to the top of Tabor—a loftier hill than any in sight—and their hearts begin to burn within them as they see their Lord talking to the Celestial Messengers on that memorable transfiguration morn,

> "When in the sad days of his flesh, o'er Christ a glory came,
> And light o'erflowed him like a sea, and raised his shining brow,
> And the voice came forth which bade all worlds the Son of God avow,"

and talking not of heaven's splendours but of Calvary's death! The preacher is not imaginative in thought, or refined in language; but he is in earnest: he is possessed, moreover, of true natural eloquence; and as his voice rises with his subject, and his eye kindles, every heart in the audience is hushed, and not a few tears are seen stealing down the cheeks of both young and old. Now he quotes a few lines of poetry; and now he tells some interesting or plaintive anecdote, and their attention is still faster rivetted. By-and-bye his earnestness becomes overwhelming in its intensity, he has seized the two-edged sword of appeal, and is wielding it with a giant's arm. He alludes to their privileges: he contrasts that peaceful field-meeting with those of their forefathers in the days of the Covenant. "You have no arms in your hands—there are no watchmen posted on these silent hills. How great should be your gratitude!" Ere finishing, as if from

an irresistible impulse, he takes occasion to enumerate the years of his own ministry ; to allude to the tent-preachings of the past on that same spot ; to speak of those who once worshipped there, but who were now in a better world ; and to talk of death as impending over his auditors and himself. He closes, and a thousand loosened breasts return him the truest applause. His word has been prophetic. Never more shall he preach at that tent. Never more shall he there see the June sun, hear the murmur of that silver Earn, on the sacramental sabbath-day, or behold the thick daisies of that green sward where—

"You scarce can see the grass for flowers."

Long ere summer has revolved, his manly form is to be consigned to yonder grave-yard on the west, which surrounds the parish-church with its spire. The sunshine of October is to look in upon his death-bed—his dying eye is to rest upon the autumn stubble—the fallen leaves are to play upon his grave—and that dreamy-eyed boy under the tree, is to awake one awful morning, and to encounter almost the bitterness of death as he feels himself *Fatherless !*

The services of the day go on. Part of the multitude now repair to the church where the communion is being celebrated, others remain at the tent, where a succession of ministers appear, and, with various degrees of power, unction, and eloquence, perpetuate the impression made by the opening sermon. We notice with peculiar interest one remarkable man, preaching to the smallest audience that has been collected on that green to-day. Fit though few is his audience. Yet, note well his aspect. His stature is tall—his brow not broad but lofty—anxiety and suffering have anticipated the work of age, instamping premature wrinkles on his forehead, and shedding premature specks of snow upon his head. His eye is small, sunk, self-involved—his face has retired into a dream ; but, on his lips there is carved a perpetual smile. He reads for his text, " Thy righteousness, also, O Lord, is very high." His manner, at first, is slow and embarrassed—his gesture is

uncouth, and at times furious—his voice sometimes sinks into an inarticulate murmur, and is at times exaggerated to a yell. But, as he continues to preach, a strange fascination seems to exhale out of him—a fine train of thought is found to underlie the woof of his words, and you cry, "Is not this genius?" And when he speaks of the lofty righteousness of the Lord, and compares it to the inaccessible grandeur of the blue summer heaven, and points his finger up toward that "terrible crystal," in which the afternoon sun is now glowing, the climax is perfect—and you bow down melted and thrilled beneath the sublimity of his thought.

The evening service is the most solemn of all. But here let us shift the scene six miles to the east, and look at another tent-service there. It is taking place in a field, near the town of Crieff, and commands a more striking distant amphitheatre of view than even the "green" of Comrie. The dark mountains on the west are seen relieved and softened in outline against the far-off sky. Another chain, invisible from the banks of the Earn, appear in the north-west, resting against the horizon, like leaning Titans. Two of the loftiest of Scotland's mountains are here also seen—Benvoirlich and Stincknachroan—looking in, as from another world, over the tops of the inferior hills, and with sprinklings of snow on their brows, unmelted amid the blaze of June. Evening is casting its divine hues over this noble expanse of prospect. A large star or two has come out, and, like a quiet, thoughtful, happy eye, is watching the scene. The broad, pale, spectral moon

> "Has climbed the blue steep of the eastern sky,
> And sits and tarries for the coming night."

The sun, meanwhile, is dying, like a king on a couch of gold, supported by the blue ethereal mountains, and with curtains of purple and crimson waving around the gorgeous bed. In such a scene the last preacher of the sacramental day begins its closing service, not unconscious of the interest of the circumstances and the romance of

the scene. Perhaps he selects the subject of the judgment-day—and, to a silent and awe-struck throng, describes the gathering of the clouds of doom—the tolling of the funereal bell of the universe—the going out of "that moon, that sun, and those stars—the appearance of the Saviour in the sky—the rising of the dead—the commencement of the great trial—the judgment-seat—the books opened—the heavens and the earth fleeing away—and that final rolling in sunder from each other of the two streams of moral being—those of the evil and of the good—which, at this tremendous point, are to dispart and to meet no more for ever. Words would fail in describing the impression made by such a subject, treated amid such a scene. There was no outbreak of emotion, few tears, and no cries; but the soul of the whole assembly was touched to the quick; the faces of all, as they left the meeting, carried a soft deep shadow upon them—and, as they wound their way under the night canopy toward their homes, their hearts were softened and solemnized, and often their minds and language exalted to a pitch which now it is difficult to realize.

Such scenes enable one to realize the Covenanting period—to believe implicitly in the existence of an earnestness of which this which was daily witnessed was only a faint, though true, relic; and to feel, moreover, how much the presence of natural beauty and grandeur can serve to increase the power of spiritual truth. Not that these plain masses of men were all fully aware of the impression made by external scenery on their minds. Indeed one of them was somewhat scandalized when spoken to of the fine view from the tent of Crieff. But it told on them not the less really that they were not conscious of the cause—

> "Like some sweet beguiling melody—
> So sweet we *know not* we are listening to it."

Thus did the natural beauties of the scene incarnate the profounder religious emotion so softly and thoroughly that they were not felt in the process. Perhaps, even some of

the hearers thought the glances which they could not but cast around at Nature's loveliness, and the emotions which sprung from them, rather "carnal" than otherwise. But no matter: they *had* combined with the sublimer "powers of the world to come" to produce a complex emotion of love and fear, of delight and of solemnity, never on earth or in eternity to be forgotten.

This serves to suggest as the next general remark, that, along with this pervading earnestness in the Covenanters, there were mingled many elements of blindness and bigotry. These stern justice forbids us to overlook. Every allowance should, indeed, be made for the age in which they lived—and for the popish scales which still hovered before their eyes. But, after all these deductions are made, there remain about them a form and shape of character, as well as modes of feeling and of thought, which constitute most undesirable models, and which indicate a sad declension from the days of primitive christianity. It were an easy task to "rake up the ashes of our fathers," and to prove them guilty, not merely of occasional outrages which humanity condemns, but of extreme narrowness and illiberality of view; of profound misconceptions, in many respects, alike of God's character and Christ's faith—of ignorance of natural laws, and of greater ignorance still of much that is implied in the important word so often in their mouths, God-speil, or Gospel. But why throw out a current of invective against the noble dead who were cut off in the morning-twilight, when we find, even in the comparative noon-day of our time, most of their mistakes not only extant but far more offensively protruded. The hard dogmatic edge given to the flexible and ever-flowing form of christianity —the clinging to creeds and confessions, as if they were the essence, and not the poor abridgement of divine truth —the bibliolatry, the trust in external schemes of propagation—the belief in a modified civil tyranny as the grand method of spreading the gospel—the crushing contempt for differences of opinion and varieties of spiritual insight—the dream of uniformity as possible, *without a*

theocracy, on earth—the sidelong and suspicious attitude held toward science, philosophy, even nature—as if the God of the dead and of the living were not the same. All these, and more than these, we might pardon and pass by in the Polyphemi of the past, but not in their unhappy imitators in many churches and lands of the present, who, like owls half-awakened at noon, have come out, screaming their midnight inspiration into the ears of a new age—and whose voice is only able to recall the darkness, to re-suggest the horrors and falsehoods, but not to bring round the worship, or the love, or the zeal, or the faith, of a bygone day.

There is, however, in every day's experience much to demonstrate that, in the worst sense,

> "The ancient spirit is not dead ;
> Old times, methinks, are breathing still."

Honour to the men of the past! but none to their dregs, their mimics, their caricatures. None to those who would, in the earnest or affected pursuit of their steps, reproduce most of their errors without the vantage-ground of their darkness, and commit many of their mistakes without that fine madness which alone can atone for them. A sincere, somewhat bigotted, enthusiast in the seventeenth century may be compared to one of the vast creatures of the bygone chaos—the magnificent miscreations of geology, interesting and most instructive as a fossil remain ; but should some stray relic of the mastodon or ichthyosaurus come out now from a distant desert, would not man unanimously hoot him back or hunt him down, and say, "Your day is over ; your race has served its purpose and cannot be perpetuated. Besides you are but a degenerate specimen. Begone!" Lingering, nevertheless, with interest and admiration around these heroes of another age, we notice the deep, disinterested piety of their natures. Would, indeed, this quality were to return—and undoubtedly it will, although in a more liberal guise! Their "life was hid with Christ in God." They habitually "saw him who is invisible." They fed on the "hidden manna"—a heavenly and immortal food. Like the steeds of Achilles, no pabulum less than

celestial touched their spiritual palates. It was this which supported them in the moors, and gave them in solitudes and on scaffolds meat to eat of which their enemies knew not. In a manner we can hardly even now conceive, they seem to have realised God in all their ways and wanderings. "His word was nigh them." His awe was a second shadow along their path. His love was felt like another mantle around their chilled and cowering frames. They renewed, in many points, the Hebrew's feeling of his Maker. No need of demonstrating a God to them, or of demonstrating him to others. This process—a process in itself impossible—they never even attempted to perform. They lived, moved, and had their being in God. Every shadow or sunbeam which fell on them was that of the Great Whole. *He* watched over their slumber; *He* was the real guard upon their mountain-tops; *He* delivered them out of the hand of their enemies, and sometimes he delivered their enemies into their hands. It is curious how the religion of the Jews has rooted itself more deeply in Scotland than in any other quarter of the globe; how this fiery exotic of a torrid clime has flourished best in the land of mist and snow. Many reasons might be assigned for this. Both countries, amid their diversities of climate, are mountain-lands, full of bold rocky scenery, of ravines and of rivers, and with lakes reposing in the midst of barren mountains, and with rich vales alternating with gloomy desolations. Owing partly to their scenery, and partly to their poverty and insulation, both the Hebrews and the Scotch have been a thoughtful people, inclined to religion, awe-struck by the visible phenomena of the universe, and fond of looking at things in their great masses. More of the analytic element has gradually, indeed, been developed from the Scottish mind; but the fragments of Celtic and border poetry which are extant, serve to prove a striking original resemblance between the genius of the two nations, which in both was bold, figurative, lyrical, and fonder of the rude sublime than of the delicate and the beautiful. Hence one reason of the ready and warm reception with which christianity was welcomed in

Scotland, the tenacity with which it has been retained, and the deep and solemn colouring with which it has tinged the popular mind. Hence, too, the reason why the spirit of the Old Testament has met with a profounder response than that of the New ; the cosmopolitan aspect, the loving spirit, the gentle and childlike tone of which were less congenial than the severer purpose, the sterner fire, the more condensed and darker zeal, and the poetic ardours of the prophets, and have been less diligently and successfully transplanted into the Scottish soil. The apostles of the Lamb are less suggested to us by the Camerons, Renwicks, and Rutherfurds, than are the Elijahs, Ezekiels, and Malachis of the old dispensation, in their "deep-furrowed garments of trembling," their metaphorical speech, the hurrying movement of their thought and style, which seems to fling itself, like an impatient eagle, from crag to crag, and the anger which surrounds them as with flames of devouring fire, and renders the place where they stand dreadful and insulated, like the top of Sinai on that morning when it was "all of a smoke," as the feet of Jehovah burned upon it.

The piety of the Covenanters has often been charged with cant. Nor are we disposed altogether to deny the charge. We find much in their spoken and written language calculated to offend our modern taste. We find undue familiarity with divine things, extravagant and absurd expressions of religious feeling, a profusion of such epithets as "Sweet Jesus," "Dear Jesus," and "To sleep in the arms of Christ my Lord," &c., and a use of scripture language in circumstances which render it little else than disgusting. We could easily cull whole pages from Samuel Rutherfurd, Andrew Wellwood, and others of their time, which would excite risible emotions as certainly as the ravings of Mause, or the sermons of Habakkuk Mucklewrath, in Old Mortality. But this, while it might make sport to the profane, could not fail to make the judicious and the pious grieve. The laughter produced would be poor and cheap ; the sting left behind would be sharp and deadly. 'Twas often a barbarous *patois* which these men spoke, being that of

their age and country; but their spirit being that of earnestness, faith, and christian principle, would have redeemed ten thousand greater faults than slips of taste and errors in language. Piety, like charity and genius, should cover a multitude of sins, and will do so to all manly and ingenuous minds. Great excitement seldom picks its words; it deals in blunt and powerful language; and he were a wretched critic who, in hearing a Burke, a Chalmers, or a Wilson, in their hours of "torrent rapture," should pause to mark, with malignant accuracy, the harsher tones in their voices, the slight blunders in their syntax, or the petty provincialisms in their accent. But such views may be more appropriately developed in the course of an examination of the literature of the Covenanters, which has met with great injustice.

We mark, next, with no little admiration, the courage and constancy of this remarkable people. What courage was theirs, let the records already given of the fights of Pentland, Drumclog, and Airsmoss, not to speak of innumerable smaller skirmishes, attest. Even the battle of Bothwell was lost less from the want of courage than from untoward circumstances and the evil effects of party spirit. The covenanting warriors were often imperfectly armed—many had only scythes, or bludgeons, or pitchforks; they were for the most part untrained to the use of arms; they were almost always forced to fight at odds, and yet even their enemies have never denied their bravery. How great the daring required in those little parties who ventured, at Rutherglen and Sanquhar, to burn the acts against the covenanting reformation, and to issue declarations against the ruling powers—in Cargill and Cameron publicly excommunicating the king; in the manner in which imprisonments, or confinements in damp caves, were borne; in the unmurmuring silence or holy triumph with which the martyrs mounted their scaffolds, and found themselves "face to face with death;" and in the patience with which they bore the exquisite tortures, or, worse still, the cruel scoffings which attended their trials. Even the flight to which they were often obliged to betake themselves,

becomes a new element in our estimate of their courage. There is a difference between even the back of a brave man and the back of a coward. The Covenanter had often to run, but it was before a superior force—often he turned round upon his pursuers—he retired, as well as advanced, like a lion—skill, sagacity, self-possession, distinguished and secured his retreat, and in the last extremity he was more ready to fight and die than to yield. Sometimes, hearing that the dragoons were approaching, he, like Thomas Brown, the cousin of John of Priesthill, went out calmly to cross their track, passed himself off for a stranger, and when asked if "the fanatic Brown" was at home, truly answered that *he was not*, and was permitted to pass on his way. Sometimes, like John MacClement, pressed hard by his pursuers, when he turned the corner of a hill, seeing a sheep lying dead on the heath, he took off his coat, lifted the sheep on his back, met his enemies, who mistook him for a shepherd—entered into conversation with them, and succeeded in sending them on a false scent in pursuit of himself. Sometimes, like John Dempster, when pursued so hotly that the horse of the nearest dragoon was pressing on his shoulder, he turned round, plunged a large pair of scissors, his only weapon, into the horse's forehead, which made him rear, throw his rider, and enable John to escape into the shadow of an adjacent wood. Sometimes, like John Fergusson, when chased to the brink of a dark, deep pool, in a river surrounded by thick willows, he first threw his bonnet and a rake with which he had been working in a hayfield, down the stream, and then plunged under the water, screened by the shade of the willows, and keeping his head above the waves—his pursuers imagining, from the bonnet and rake, that he had drowned himself and been swept down by the current. The whole annals of romance, in short, including the marvellous escapes described by Le Sage, Godwin, Radcliffe, Scott, and Bulwer, contain no adventures more striking, no incidents more intensely interesting, no such "hair-breadth" escapes, as those which abound in the history of

the Covenant, and which corroborate the well-known statement,

"Truth is strange—stranger than fiction."

The courage, too, of the women of the Covenant, must not be forgotten. Truly, from Lady Hamilton standing on Leith shore, with her pistol and gold bullets, ready to shoot her son if he landed—to Isabel Weir, sitting silent and with covered face beside her husband's corpse—they were high-hearted women, those of the Covenanting times!—true, full of a noble simplicity, blended with yet a nobler guile—most disinterested in their attachment, most devoted to their principles, and equally brave and sagacious in the use of means in their husbands' or lovers' rescue or defence. Their ornaments were not of gold, or pearls, or costly array—the simple snood, the coif, the plaid, were their dress, but there was that within which passed show, and the enthusiasm which pervaded Scotland nowhere beat more powerfully than in the hearts of her daughters. Now, they concealed their husbands under beds, or in lumber-rooms, and then went out and firmly met the pursuers, and answered their questions. Now, when their husbands were away with their babes to be baptized at conventicles, and when the dragoons came in search, they filled the empty cradles with rags, and continued to rock them, lest the absence of the infants should awaken suspicions as to the errand of the parents. Now, like the immortal Bessie Maclure, in Scott, they sate at the turning of two ways, at the even-tide, and warned the lonely fugitive that there was a lion in the path. Now, they assisted their husbands in scooping out hollow spots of refuge among the hills. Many a time and oft did they keep the midnight-fire burning in their cots, and have a midnight-morsel ready, that their husbands—cold, and wet, and hungry—might steal in and spend an hour or two, in trembling joy, at their own hearth-side. Often, when this was impossible, whenever the darkness fell, and the darker the better—and better still if the wind was loud, and the rain falling

thick—did these gallant matrons lift up their small bundles of provisions, draw their plaids closely around them, and set out to visit the dark caverns, or pits, or the sides of the precipices, where their husbands were lurking, and feed and comfort them there. When tried by horrid tortures to reveal the spots of their retreat, they refused. When led out, as was often the case, to die beside them, they took it right joyfully. And many a drink of whey and piece of oat-cake did they, standing at the door of their dwellings, give, at the hazard of their own safety, to haggard wayfaring-men, who were pursued by the voice of the blood of Magus Muir, or fleeing from the echo of the rout of Bothwell.

Honour to the memory of such noble daughters of Almighty God! No theatrical airs or meretricious graces about them. Never does any one of them, like Charlotte Corday, step out of woman's sphere and become a sublime assassin—nor, like Madame Roland, mingle a certain affectation and grimace with the grandeurs of a heroic death. They were as simple as they were great. Their characters seem modelled upon that of Scotland's scenery—their hearts were soft as its vales, while their principles were like its hills, high, firm, and unmoveable. And Scotland can boast of a similar class of women still, who are worthy of having sprung from the daughters of the Covenant, and in whom superior knowledge and refinement have not deadened the sense of right, damped the glow of piety, or degraded the fine instincts of virtuous and disinterested womanhood. Female atheists there are even in Scotland—victims of a morbid sensibility, or of morbid and false culture; but in general our female heart beats in the right place—it is not disposed to cast off christianity as a garment—to change it as a vesture is changed, and to substitute for it a vague pantheism, or a distinctly-defined rationalistic creed. Here, indeed, as well as in England, the men, particularly the young men, are passing through that strange burning fiery furnace of doubt which has been kindled from abroad, and many of them have been consumed; but our women, as

a whole, have not had a hair of their head touched by its flames. The good, the active, the benevolent, the true-hearted women of Scotland are christians in faith as well as in practice, and are the real blood and life of all her churches.

Not inferior to the courage was the constancy of this people. The word applied to them by Scott in Redgauntlet, describes them in this point admirably. "The whigs," says Wandering Willie, "were as *doure* as the cavaliers were fierce." Yes, *doure* (from the Latin "*durus*,") is the word for their perseverance and intensity of resistance. It was an assault of lightning—flash after flash—bolt after bolt; they had to encounter here the forked fire of a Claverhouse, and there the dull thunderbolts of a Turner or a Dalziel. But grim was the array of rocks which met and repelled it; and while the lightning exhausted itself and passed, the rocks were found split, scorched, but REMAINING. This constancy was partly created by the depth with which religion had ploughed itself into the southern Scottish heart—partly by the activity and energy of the ministers—partly by a certain stubbornness which adheres to the national character, and partly by the recoil and reaction generally produced by the very severity of a persecution. The Scotchman driven desperate, may be likened, not so much to the stag at bay, as to the wolf, in the Lays of Ancient Rome, which

> "Dies in silence, *biting hard*,
> Amidst the DYING hounds."

This "doureness" may be, partly, also, owing, at once in its spirit and its success, to our scenery. "Deep calleth unto deep." The contemplation of fixed features in nature—of changeless moors and granite mountains—of rocks on whose faces each wrinkle is the work of a century—of the monotonous surface of the ocean and the unalterable splendours of the stars, is calculated to create a certain rugged determination in the minds of the inhabitants. They become fierce as the tiger, yet patient as the camel when passing over his interminable deserts. The motto

of such men is, "I bide my time." Hence the revenge, the love, the fear, the loyalty, the superstition, the manners and religion of North Britain, have all been distinguished by a slow fire, a long deep fervour, and are well described in one of their ballads, referring to the attachment of the Highlanders to Charles Edward—

> "And sure that love must be sincere,
> Which still proves true whate'er betide,
> And for his sake leaves a' beside."

In fact, it is only in the sturdy devotion of the clans to the Stewart family, that we find a complete counterpart in later ages to the determined attachment of the Covenanters to their banner. And it is remarkable that both these enthusiasms were sheltered, strengthened, and conserved, by the fact, that they divided between them the two great mountain-tracts of the country—the northern and southern Highlands. From these, as from two peaks, flared up in contradiction and reply to each other, for a century and more, the two fierce, tremulous, waving, yet fixed, flame-pillars of Jacobite and presbyterian zeal.

There are some remarks of William Howitt which bear eloquently on this topic, "Thanks be to God for mountains! When I turn my eyes upon the map of the world, and behold how wonderfully the countries where our faith was nurtured, where our liberties were generated, where our philosophy and literature, the fountains of our intellectual grace and beauty, sprang up, were as distinctly walled out by God's hand with mountain-ramparts, as if at the especial prayer of the early fathers of man's destinies, I am lost in an exulting admiration. Look at the bold barriers of Palestine! see how the infant liberties of Greece were sheltered from the vast tribes of the uncivilised north by the heights of Hæmus and Rhodope! behold how the Alps describe their magnificent crescent, inclining their opposite extremities to the Adriatic and Tyrrhene seas, locking up Italy from the Gallic and Teutonic hordes till the power and spirit of Rome had reached their maturity, and she had opened the wide forest of

Europe to the light, spread far her laws and language, and planted the seeds of many mighty nations!"

"Thanks be to God for mountains! Their colossal firmness seems almost to break the current of time itself. While a multitude of changes has remoulded the people of Europe, while languages and laws, and dynasties, and creeds have passed over it, like shadows over the landscape, the children of the Celt and of the Goth, who fled to the mountains a thousand years ago, are found there now, and shew us in face and figure, in language and garb, what their fathers were; shew us a fine contrast with the modern tribes dwelling below and around them; and shew us, moreover, how adverse is the spirit of the mountain to mutability, and that there the fiery heart of freedom is found for ever."

Public spirit, and the presence of impersonal enthusiasm, are qualities often connected with such earnestness and piety as we have already attributed to the Scottish Covenanters. But there have been times, in which piety and earnestness have flowed more in personal and less in public channels, in which the question has been more, "What shall I do to be saved?" than What shall I do to save the church at large? In the era of methodism, the former was the question which ran through the land and created the excitement. In the days of the Covenant, although personal piety flourished, and revivals abounded, the great point was the best mode of promoting the extension, the liberty, and the power of the general church. There was then in Scotland little purely theological controversy. The shadow of scepticism upon individual minds, although not unknown, did not lie so heavily as often now; doubt was lost in action; and every noble mind and heart, instead of tormenting itself and others with unanswerable questions, rushed eagerly into public work "as the horse rusheth into the battle." With this devotedness to a public "testimony-bearing," there were indeed many formidable evils connected. In the first place, it to a great extent foreclosed the exercise of free thought and enquiry. It added a dogmatic stamp

to opinion, and hurried it to an untrue test, that of the sword. It hindered progress, and often stereotyped error. But it had important advantages, too. It prevented all half-measures, all halting between two opinions, all useless scruples, and secured unity, consistency, and energy in the prosecution of their views. They felt that their duty was not to think, but to do. We quote a few remarks on this subject from a deceased Scotch divine of great eminence in his day:* "Our fathers have often told us how much, in their earlier years, they were embarked in the cause of religion, as an object of great public concern; and have complained that the good fame which well belonged to it as a public cause, is now abandoned by a generation who feel, or pretend to feel, that their religious concern is only and properly directed about their own individual interest or personal salvation. In contemplating the history of the church of Scotland in its earlier days, and comparing it with the appearance of the religious world in our country at present, we cannot help being deeply struck with the difference of regard then and now paid to the public cause, or the welfare of the church of Christ, with the far deeper concern they took in it, compared with the little interest which we feel in the great sacrifices which they made for its support, in comparison of the scorn which in many instances we attach to its name. It was a remarkable feature of the second reformation, in the year 1638, that the fine spirit of concern about the public cause, which the enemy during the preceding apostacy had attempted by every means to eradicate or repress, once more sprung elate, and recovering all its former buoyancy, spread its renovated and unabated influence over the church of Scotland. The church proceeded in reformation, and everywhere the word of God grew and multiplied. In that auspicious period, one of the most sublime enterprises which the conception of man ever has at any time grasped,

* The late John Jameson, of Methven. The reader may find him described as the *second* minister of the tent-preaching scene, p. 128.

began to be put in progress—the church of Christ, exerting her moral and religious power on the world, and bringing a whole nation under the practical influence of the word of God. It might have been expected that the public spirit, which in 1638 resumed its elasticity, would, at the revolution, when it made its escape from a more fiery trial, have burst forth with a purer fire and blazed with a brighter flame. What shall we say? The storm, indeed, was laid, the clouds had been dispelled, and the sun again had broken forth; but it was a sun shorn of his beams. That fine spirit which could not, or would not, temporize, which in matters of God, between truth and error, light and darkness, duty and sin, the rights of God, and the pleasure, or the vanity, or the folly of man, could admit of no compromise—that spirit was sadly dissipated. The church of Scotland came to the revolution a goodly vine withered in the blast. Abashed at the sight, the genius of the reformation hung her head, and wept over her wasted and departing spirit."

We do not entirely coincide with these eloquent remarks; and continue to believe that whatever may be said of the design of the second reformation, the means employed to promote it were unchristian, and therefore abortive. But it may be granted that the prevalence of public spirit in the Covenanting age led to noble results on character. These men of the Covenant were in the last degree unselfish. They were swallowed up in their cause. They never thought about themselves at all. Their language was, in effect, that of Danton, "Let my name be blighted — what am I? — the cause alone is great!" Hence, we find little egotism in their words, and none in their actions. Never is the most gifted of them found asking the question, "What shall I do to be for ever known? but What shall I do to make known God's great name, and to bind his Covenant for ever around the loins and heart of my country." Base and self-seeking men there were, doubtless, among them, but nations are never hypocrites *en masse*, and, in general, the Covenanting people were as disinterested as they were brave. It is not necessary to decry the love of fame, nor

even that inferior shape of it, the love of reputation. There is equal truth and spirit in the words of Milton :—

> "Fame is the spur which the clear spirit doth raise,
> The last infirmity of noble minds."

And the love of reputation, even to the degree which made Johnson value the "praise of every human being," is a natural and a noble principle. But there is something higher than both. Echoes are found at the foot of rocks, but above them there is a lofty region whence no response can be returned, because the canopy is the sky ; so are there those who speak at once to heaven, and who, as they do not expect, are not astonished to receive, no audible answer. On that eminence, where the future verdict of God is alone appealed to, and where immediate human applause, and even the calm decision of posterity, are not regarded, stood the better and braver of the children of the Covenant.

The eloquence of such men was precisely what might have been expected from their character, their excitation, and their circumstances. Polish or elaboration, *lucidus ordo* or *concinnitas*, were hardly to be expected in the oratory of those who mounted the pulpit at the hazard of their lives, and whose sermons were apt to be interrupted by the shots of the foe. But the elements of astonishing eloquence were found in their extempore harangues. MacBriar's supposed sermon in Old Mortality, at the close of the battle of Drumclog, is, probably a very fair specimen of the discourses which acted with such trumpet-like effect upon the peopled moor-sides of Fife and Galloway. In such sermons, a profusion of Scripture was used; every resemblance that could be found between their circumstances and those of the old Jews and christians was carefully brought forward ; there was little didactic matter, but there was much stirring practical appeal ; the metaphors were massive and bold—the allusions to the natural objects around them were not so numerous as they would be in similar circumstances now ; but they always told, and the general effect was to create in every breast, the irresistible cry, "Lead us to

battle!" The manner of their preachers was far from graceful: they almost invariably *sang* a gamut of their own; their voices were more sonorous than sweet, and their gesture was uncouth and uncultured. But some can testify from recollection how powerful *singing*, as it was called, became, particularly on sacramental occasions, and in the serving of communion-tables. We have heard at such times wild strains of oratorical melody, no doubt handed down from the days of the Covenant, and which, if at first they rather tended to excite a smile in the young, rarely failed, ere they closed, to melt both young and old, both speaker and audience, into tears. Power there certainly was, however rudely disguised, in those mountain-preachings, which drew and detained thousands in the wilderness—which nerved men for the most unequal and bloody contests — which soothed agony, awakened faith, relieved the pangs of hunger, covered the shame of nakedness, and kept hope burning, like a torch in the wind, for twenty-eight terrible years.

The literature of the Covenanting age, like its oratory, must not be tried by a severe æsthetics tandard. During the persecution, indeed, it was confined chiefly to protests, declarations, and dying testimonies. In these last, as collected in Napthali and elsewhere, there is a certain severe, purged simplicity, a pathos and grandeur which move you to your depths. There are not many individual expressions that will bear quotation; the power is in the whole; and you cannot help admiring the manly sense, spirit, calmness, dignity, and piety which distinguish the sufferers to a degree so equal that you fancy them a band of brothers. You see, undoubtedly, much of the narrowness of the times, but not a particle of the indiscreet and insane fanaticism usually ascribed to the party. One Thomas Brown, who with four others was executed on Magus Muir, *in terrorem*, although neither he nor any of his fellows was concerned in the death of Sharp, speaks out with great boldness. He prays God to remove the "deluge of wrath which is hanging over the head of these lands for the breach of Covenant in

them." He says, "I die in the faith, that the seeds sown at Bothwell Bridge shall have a glorious spring and harvest, which shall be renowned in the eyes of all the beholders of it." Elsewhere, he identifies the cause of the Covenant with Christ himself, and says that "He is forced to go to the mountains and dens and caves of the earth." He expects soon to be "a sharer of the heavenly mansions, and of the peaceable fruits of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me." The rest of his testimony is distinct, weighty, and vigorous. And yet this man was only a shoemaker!

How far more imposing, those fine stammerings of sincerity, those gasps of great dying hearts, than the most elaborate efforts of cultivated talent! They remind one of the dumb son of Crœsus bursting silence and speaking out. Or it is "as though the rocks of the sea should speak, and tell us what they have been thinking of from immemorial time." We contrast them favourably with the scaffold-speeches of the French revolutionists. If wanting their lurid sublimity, as of dying thunder, they have a softness and holy calm, like the lapse of an autumn sun. Danton cries out, "My dwelling shall soon be with annihilation!" John King says, "Welcome everlasting life, everlasting glory, everlasting love, and everlasting praise." Vergniaud and his doomed Girondists sing, on the last night of their life, tumultuous songs, and weave ghastly dialogues with Satan about their enemy, Robespierre. The five at Magus Muir pass away to glory singing Psalm XXXIV, with these, among other of its words of celestial cheer :—

"The angel of the Lord encamps
  And round encompasseth
All those about that do him fear,
  And them delivereth.

The lions' young may hungry be,
  And they may lack their food;
But they who truly seek the Lord
  Shall not lack any good."

But the Covenant, before the persecution, had produced a peculiar and very interesting literature. It is not indeed so well known as the contemporaneous works of the Puritan writers. Nor can the writings of either the early or the later Covenanters be placed upon anything like an equality with those of the English divines of the same periods. It is vain to seek among the Scotch for a John Howe, that gentlest and most symmetrical of the sons of Anak—strong as an earth-born Titan, and yet beautiful as a woman, and with the fiery air of a seraph breathing around his vast form—a Plato added to the eastern sages, and with them bending at the manger, and spreading out treasure of myrrh, frankincense, and gold, before the divine child; for a John Owen, the weighty, the minute, the learned—with all the solidity, the wide compass, and the gnarled knots of the broad old oak; for the "incomparable Culverwell," as one enthusiastically calls him; for Bates, the "silver-tongued;" for the massive Manton; for the ingenious Charnock; for the richly practical Flavel; for Bunyan, the inspired dreamer, to whom in sleep, as in that isle of enchantment, the "clouds opened and showed riches," and who when he awoke "cried to dream again;" and, if we may class HIM with any cluster in any firmament—for a Milton—

"Whose soul was like a star, and dwelt apart."

Still we find among our rugged lowland men some writers worthy of long memory, and who in sincerity, and perhaps in native force, if not in art and culture, are inferior only to the highest of those English authors just named. Among these, Hugh Binning's works, which fill a thick quarto volume, are distinguished by clear arrangement, evangelical richness of matter, and, for that age, correctness and elegance of style. This author died in his twenty-sixth year, but not till he had, besides writing much, acquired great fame as a pulpit orator. One bad but characteristic pun of Cromwell's is recorded in connection with his name. He had once, it is said, held a dispute with the general's divines on the points in contest between

the independents and presbyterians, and had succeeded in silencing them. Cromwell asked what bold and learned youth this was. He was told it was one Binning (the Scotch for "binding,") and answered, "He hath *bound* well indeed, but," laying his hand on his sword, "*This* will loose all again!" William Guthrie, of Fenwick, in Ayrshire, cousin of James Guthrie, the martyr, and reputed the "greatest preacher in Scotland," has left one little treatise: The Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ, which deserves perusal as a most searching and vigorous tractate, and which, if it does not captivate the heart or the fancy by its beauty, casts very strong grappling-irons upon the conscience of its reader. Durham's treatises on Isaiah, on the Song of Solomon, and on the Revelation, were once very popular, although they have outlived their day. He was undoubtedly a man of great industry and attainments, and of eminent talents. He was born in the neighbourhood of Dundee, became a minister in Glasgow, wrote at least ten volumes and, like many of the Covenanting worthies, died young—ere he had completed his thirty-sixth year. Robert Blair, Alexander Henderson, and George Gillespie, who were all reputed men of first-rate abilities, have left little to substantiate their reputation, and with that little few are acquainted. Robert Traill's works were written after the Revolution, and, although dry and systematic, are able, and their Calvinism is somewhat ultra. The names of Brown, of Wamphray, of Calderwood, and of Woodrow, are familiar. But by far the most remarkable specimens, both of the power and the weakness, the faults and the merits, of the Covenanting school, are to be found in the works, and particularly the letters, of Samuel Rutherfurd, and in a little book breathing a similar spirit, entitled A Glimpse of Glory, by Andrew Wellwood.

Samuel Rutherfurd was the son of a gentleman in Edinburgh. He attended its university, and at an early age was made professor of philosophy; predecessor thus of the many illustrious men who have taught philosophy in that chair—of Stewart, of Brown, and last and greatest far,

of Wilson, now, alas! in the sere and yellow leaf of one of the most glorious minds which ever emanated from the Creator. From the chair of philosophy Rutherfurd passed to be minister in Anwoth, Galloway, without being required to bend before the golden calf of the bishops. Here he published his Exercitationes de Gratiâ, a learned and powerful tractate against Arminianism, for which he narrowly escaped punishment at the bar of the High Court of Commission. Nevertheless, he persisted in his nonconformity to the prevailing powers, and was on the 27th of July, 1636, deprived of his ministerial functions, and confined in the city of Aberdeen, during the king's pleasure. At the end of a year and a half he returned to his flock, and renewed his labours with greater zeal and energy than ever. He appeared at the famous Glasgow Assembly, where he gave an account of his proceedings, his confinement and its causes, and was by it appointed divinity professor at St. Andrew's, where he created an excitement only second to that produced by Chalmers two centuries afterwards in the same place. St. Andrew's has had the fortune to be twice revived from the deepest lethargy by two extraordinary men; from the lethargy of the prelates, by Samuel Rutherfurd, and from the lethargy of the professors, by Thomas Chalmers. Its grass-grown streets owned in each the presence of a Man, and the echoes of its halls and churches awoke in both cases to the voice of a christian orator. In the year 1643, Rutherfurd, as we have seen, went up with three others to the Westminster Assembly, and played his part there manfully and ably. Shortly after he published his "Lex. Rex.," an elaborate volume, in which he wields a two-edged sword against what he thought the extremes of independency, on the one hand, and of erastianism, on the other. This book—now totally unread, except by antiquarians or history-writers, and the very name of which is unknown to many, who devour daily his Letters—had the honour to be answered at the Cross of Edinburgh, in letters of fire, and by the hand of the common hangman. This was in 1661. What a pity that this same swift and summary method of disposing of

unanswerable and "untoward" books, does not still exist! Then we might witness, although not assist at, the burning obsequies of many modern works, to which fire, as a type of unreasoning and unsatisfied fury, were the only possible reply. While Rutherfurd's book was thus consuming, his noble body and mind were environed in another furnace—that of death. The parliament, after burning his treatise, were about to indict him at their bar while he was lying quiet and joyful, waiting for a higher summons. His book was burned, indeed, at the very gates of the college wherein he lay dying—the scent of its conflagration seems to have reached him on his death-bed—but he cared for none of these things, his soul had soared already far above *Rex* and *Lex*, far beyond the loftiest reaches of even his Letters, far beyond Beulah and the black River of Death. He had said, "Mine eyes shall see my Redeemer—I know he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and I shall be caught up to the clouds to meet him in the air, and so shall I be ever with him." "This night shall close the door, and put my anchor within the vail; and I shall go away in a sleep by five o'clock in the morning." And so it was: at that hour he gave up the ghost, and, in the striking language of one of his biographers, "the renowned eagle took his flight to the mountains of spices."

Samuel Rutherfurd had his faults, which have been blazoned and exaggerated by one or two late writers, who are not worthy of unloosing his shoe-latchets. Let them speak as they please of his "spiritual sensualism," and throw out dark hints that there was another sensualism of a less pardonable kind behind it. But surely every man who has ever candidly studied either his character or his writings, must be persuaded that he was not only essentially a holy man, but an earnest and a "burning one." He breathed and lived and had his being in celestial love! He would undoubtedly have been greater had he been more calm—had, in other words, the insight and the affection, which were both in him, been more thoroughly reconciled and attempered to each other—had the cherub looked through the seraph's eyes, and had the

seraph added his fiery edge to the cherub's wings ; but, as it was, he has in his Letters attained rare heights of a sublime and rapturous devotion.

There are books which seem to have been written, and which should be read, in summer. At other seasons they may appear somewhat over-coloured and exaggerated ; but let

"Summer be the tide, and sweet the hour"—

let the old deluge of day be pouring from its old source—let every heart and eye be drinking in the unmeasured radiance—let each soul feel that in accepting the sunshine he is receiving it as God's gift, and as the type and emblem of the higher light of the Sun of Righteousness—and then, in the intensity of the commingled emotions of sense free from sensuality, and of faith free from form—let him sit down with his mind thus in sympathy with his subject, to read carefully and admiringly Rutherfurd's Letters. Whatever he may have been for months before employed in perusing, with an interest however intense, and a sympathy however deep, when he comes to read those wild, beautiful, and holy lyrics of Rutherfurd, penned from prisons, and huts, and ocean-sides, he will become conscious, more fully than ever, of a higher something —a far grander sincerity of soul—a nicer and truer melody of tenderness—more, in short, of heaven labouring and striving to reproduce itself on earth—(like the sun shooting up in wheat and daisies and roses and golden corn) than, save in Milton and Bunyan, he has ever witnessed before. He may see, but will not feel, the extravagances of his style and manner. These will be lost in the earnestness of his purpose, and the holy beauties of his thought and language. Sometimes, indeed, the mark is overshot—the boundary of good taste is overleaped—but this is never through affectation or weakness, or even the wantonness of power, but from the excess of ecstasy and of high emotion. His soul is a river of God, not only lip-full, but running over. And to think of all this as issuing from dungeons and darkness—written

in proscription and in the prospect of death! As with all true christians, Rutherfurd's heart was deeply smitten with a passion for Christ. It was not a cold, systematic christianity he believed in, but a living Saviour. It has been said of Robert Hall, that when engaged in prayer he seemed actually to *see* Christ—so personal and absorbing and ardent, did his devotion become. Just so was it with Rutherfurd. No need for his ascending to heaven or diving into the depths in search of Christ—"the Word is nigh him, in his mouth, and in his heart," and in his eye: hence the passionate peculiarity of his language. It is that of a lover, not writing to his betrothed, but clasping her in a pure and warm embrace. Take one out of a thousand expressions of this passion for Jesus—"I avouch, before God, angels, and men, that I have not seen nor can imagine a lover comparable to Jesus. I would not exchange or barter him for ten heavens; if heaven could be without him what could we do there?" Hear him again on a cognate subject—"My Lord now hath given me experience (howbeit weak and small) that our best *fare* is *hunger;* we are but at God's by-board in this lower house; we have cause to long for supper-time, and the high table up in the high palace: the world deserveth nothing but the outer court of our soul. If ye take the storm with borne-down Christ your sky will quickly clear and your morning dawn." To a widow he says, "What missing can there be of a dying man when *God filleth the chair?*" Again—"The *parings* and *crumbs* of glory that fall under Christ's table in heaven—a shower, like a thin May-mist, of his love would make me green and joyful, till the *summer sun* of *eternal glory* break up." What a sentence is the following!—"Oh, sweet for evermore, to see a rose of heaven growing in so ill a ground as hell; and to see Christ's love, his peace, faith, goodness, long-suffering and patience, growing and springing, like the flowers of God's garden, out of such stony and cursed ground as the hatred of the prelates and the malice of their high commission; and antichrist's bloody hand and heart is not here art and wisdom—is not here *heaven indented in hell* (if I may say

so) like a jewel set with skill in a ring with the enamel of Christ's cross." Speaking of a dead lady, he says, "I grant death is to her a very new thing, but heaven was prepared of old; and Christ exalted in his highest throne, *loaded with glory*, incomparably exalted above men and angels, having such a circle of glorified harpers and musicians above, compassing the throne with songs, is to her a new thing—but new as the first summer rose, or as a new paradise to a traveller broken and worn, out of breath with the sad occurrences of a long and dreary way." Or take, in fine, some extracts from his letter to that noble youth, George Gillespie, written a little before Gillespie's death. It is difficult to imagine that any one can ever read them without a sense of mournful sublimity, melting at last into tears.

"Reverend and Dear Brother,

"I cannot speak to you. The way ye know, the passage is free and not stopped, the print of the footsteps of the Forerunner is clear and manifest. Many have gone before you: ye will not sleep long in the dust before the day break; it is a far shorter piece of the end of the night to you than to Abraham and Moses; beside all the time of their bodies' resting under corruption, it is as long yet to their day as to your morning-light of awaking to glory; though their spirits, having the advantage of yours, have had now the start of the shore before you. I dare say nothing against his dispensation. I hope to follow quickly. I fear the clay house is taking down and undermining, but it is nigh the dawning; look to the east, the dawning of glory is near; the nearer the morning the darker. Some traveller seeth the city twenty miles off, and yet within the eighth part of a mile he cannot see it. Some see the goal at once, and never again till the races end—it is coming all in a sum together, when ye are in a more gracious capacity to tell it than now. "Ye are not come to the mount that might be touched; nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest; but ye are come to Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeru-

salem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the New Testament, and to the blood of sprinkling." Ye must leave the wife to a more choice husband, and the children to a better father. If ye leave any testimony to the Lord's work and covenant against both malignants and sectaries, let it be under your hand, and subscribed before faithful witnesses.

"Your loving and afflicted brother,

"SAMUEL RUTHERFURD."

St. Andrews, Sept. 27th, 1648.

Thus, two hundred years ago, wrote one saintly sufferer to another, and there is something still vital in his simple yet noble and touching words. What he says in this letter is not equal to what he says *not*. He seems curbing the boundless consolation he might have poured into the soul of his gifted and prematurely-expiring friend. We think that even Mackintosh's letter to Hall, on his coming down from the "thunder-hill" of frenzy, is not superior to this last pressure of Samuel Rutherfurd's hand upon that of his friend, Gillespie, ere he went away alone into the valley and the shadow of death.

And yet these letters give no idea of Rutherfurd in his *whole* capacity. They shew his genius, his piety, and his heart; but the man who could weep like a babe, and love like a woman, could also, as some of his other works prove, act and reason like a man. It is so with all the really gifted. They are great *all round;* and only blindness or malignity can deny it. We never hope to see his genius fully recognised: his subjects, and his peculiar treatment of them, render that impossible; but we are certain that he possessed genius of a high order, and that some, at least, of his fine rhapsodies of thought and feeling shall long survive. He has been compared to Bunyan; and there was a resemblance in the lofty reach, the imagination, the devotion, and the semi-sensuous tone of their minds; but the difference is, on the whole, to Bunyan's

advantage. He had less learning and less fancy, but he had much more creative, dramatic, and imaginative power, and has framed what life is—a story—and a story so true, that every heart on earth with whom it has ever come into contact has accepted and rejoiced over it, as if it had been its own work.

Andrew Wellwood was the son of a minister in Annandale, and was himself designed for the church, but died in his youth of consumption. This event took place in London, where he had probably fled to escape the heat of the persecution. This is all his brief history. But he has left behind him a little volume, A Glimpse of Glory, which may, with a certain class of readers, preserve for a time his name. It rather palls, as a whole, from the unflagging rapture of the writer, but contains striking passages and thoughts. We open the book almost at random, and find the following passage:—"How oft have I thought, if the wilderness is so sweet and pleasant, what must the inland be! Is there such ravishing variety of beauty, glory and sweetness, all along in my pilgrimage—what can I imagine to behold in my native country? Is the habitation where devils, wicked men, and beasts inhabit, so excellent and glorious—what can I think of the place where Jesus, the Emmanuel, with his fair company of saints and angels everlastingly abides? Is my God's footstool so glorious—what must his throne be?—Is the under-vault of this base dungeon so majestic—oh the higher hall of glory, where the glorious King and his magnificent court remain! No veil there drawn between the lower and the higher habitation—no smoky fumes betwixt heaven and earth—no winds nor storms, pinching cold or piercing heat—no vicissitudes of summer and winter—nothing but an eternal spring-tide and endless summer—a constant harvest—all are in their blooming estate and fullest perfection! What wonder! Is it not the centre of infinite influences? The sweet influences of Pleiades are never bound up—the bands of Orion are ever loosed!" And, in the same style, for two hundred and fifty pages, does this dying youth describe the little of

the glory of the place which the dim glass and his own trembling hand enable him to descry from the summit of Mount Clear; and when the long soliloquy is over, his soul has taken its bound upwards, and his weary body drops down, dust to dust, in the "sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection."

Poor, after all, it may be said, is all this literary spray you have been able to collect from the ocean of the Scottish persecution. But let us remember that it is not during persecutions or revolutions that literature is either read or written. Then the "nations are angry;" and it is not amid the hot passions of angry nations that the richest dews of genius descend. The true literature of such periods must be sought for afterwards; and a subsequent chapter will describe the influences which the Covenanting day has exerted on some of the best recent writers. The impression made on the heart and the imagination of Scotland was too profound either to be easily or early expressed, or to be soon exhausted.

Much has been said of the persecuting spirit of the Covenanters. "Why should they complain of persecution, when all they desiderated for being fierce persecutors was power? The other party had the sword; they had dropped it—that is all." Some truth of course, there is in this statement. Almost all the errors of the Covenanters sprung from their ignorance of the spirituality of Christ's present kingdom, and their absurd notion that the magistrate's sword was a necessary weapon in the christian armoury. But we have no reason to believe that they ever would have organised such a systematic and bloody persecution as that which they suffered. During the time they were in power, they did indeed commit some unjustifiable acts—such as the massacre of the prisoners after the battle of Philiphaugh; but their general administration was mildness itself compared to the subsequent conduct of their adversaries. They made, as we have seen, no reprisals upon their enemies after the revolution. The acts of violence committed by them were chiefly in self-defence, or extorted from them by despair. Above all,

they were, with all their faults, christians. They did not, like their enemies, stimulate themselves to outrage, or harden themselves against its remorse, by habitual drunkenness. What they inflicted was done in dignity, and with that measured gravity which attends judicial acts. The cruel deeds of the cavaliers might be compared to those of beasts of prey or of cannibals, "torturing mangling, devouring, drinking the blood of their victims." Those of the Covenanters were the solemn sacrifices of mistaken religious men in honour of an imperfect but profoundly-believed idea.

That idea was unquestionably a bold if not a satisfactory one. So far as it consisted in aversion to episcopacy, or in the maintenance of the rights of presbyterian parity, or in dislike to the "ill-mumbled mass" in its weary monotony and vain repetitions, or in its resistance to the insolent aggressions of the civil power, or in its determined animosity to popery—in all its phases and under all its disguises—multitudes in the present day will fully justify it. Had it confined itself to these, it had been, in every respect, a cause worthy of more than all the blood and suffering expended in its defence. In this case, we could more freely have classed the Covenanters with the Waldenses, or the early christian martyrs, as objects of unmingled sympathy and respect. But they went further than this. They held not only that the making of public covenants was a part of christian duty—although there is not the slightest evidence for this in the New Testament—but that the covenant of one age is binding upon all successive ages—a most untenable proposition; as if thought could thus be chained, or opinion stereotyped; as if each age had not a right to its own idea; as if the future should not be painted with face looking forward, and not slavishly reverting for ever to the past. This Covenant of theirs, again, as we have seen, sought an impossible object—that of uniformity of doctrine and of discipline throughout the three kingdoms. That there shall yet be a substantial uniformity of religious sentiment and worship throughout the world may be devoutly

believed. But probably this never can or will arrive, save in the train of that "new and most mighty dispensation," without which, as Foster declared his conviction, "christianity can never reform the world." Least of all could such a clumsy solvent as a solemn league be expected to melt down all differences of opinion. The method, too, followed was not that of the gospel. *That* had no banner and no sword when it first began its immortal journey. It was like Mary Howitt's exquisite Marien—a simple child, going forth shielded only by its own divinity and simplicity, and by "manifestation of the truth, commending itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." But the Covenant must have its arms, and its blazonry, and its banner, and its warlike lords, and its covenanted king, and its

"Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war."

From that moment its fate was sealed. It left the regions of the spiritual and the ideal, and became inextricably mixed up with the troublous politics of a troublous time. We do not find fault with the persecuted employing defensive weapons in the cloudy and dark day which befel them; but we do deplore the offensive attitude they took from the beginning, and the occasion they thus gave their adversaries to echo the words, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

No men ever saw more clearly than the Covenanters the objective evils springing from the interference of the state with the church. But they were absolutely blind to the subjective cause, the impossible problem of properly or profitably connecting the two powers in any formal alliance. They thought that the state was bound to feed them, but denied it the power of arranging the meals or fixing the form of the platters. They found the yoke of the state intolerable, and they threw it off for a season; but it never occurred to them that it was and ever must be a yoke, restraining their liberty, and liable at any time to be tightened to strangulation. The ministers did not sufficiently feel how dignified their position when they

were out among the moors, living on the voluntary principle, though it was on bread and salt, and water and goat's-whey, with clear consciences, and joys fresh from heaven visiting their hearts every night and morning, compared to even their return to their manses and glebes, when again they became subject to a government which could, at any hour, begin a new persecution. They abhorred formality and absolutism, but they did not see that these were just the putrid result of that very system which was supporting them, and that in all church establishments there is a strong tendency toward them, which, sooner or later, must conduct thitherward, as certainly as a corpse hung up before the summer sun will rot. They hated bishops, but saw not that, as long as establishments existed, the compact slavery of episcopalianism will be preferred by governments to the republican genius of presbytery or independency. They disliked patronage, but did not foresee how determinedly their paymasters would cling to it, as a strong curb at once to the popular element and to the priestly influence in the church, and how it was certain at a future day to break up and shatter their entire ecclesiastical system.

The grand aim of the Covenanters was certainly not gained. The moment the persecution ceased the memory of the Covenant seemed silently to drop out of the minds of men. Loudly, indeed, did the Cameronians continue to bellow words of menace and to wail out notes of woe over "covenants, burned, broken, and buried." But their voice met with no response, save in the echoes of the hills, which seemed to return it now rather in derision than in sympathy. Covenanting continued occasionally, indeed, to be practised by various sects down to a late period. But long ere its occasional use came to an end, it had lost much of its meaning and interest, and seemed rather a caricature of the past than a living expression of the faith of the present. There was no more signing of the Covenant with blood. The people who signed it were in no danger, and it was at last felt to be a belated and unmeaning rite. The Free Church of Scotland, too, has set its face

against renewing the Covenants. Still, very important ends appear to us to have been served by the Covenanting struggle, and the statement of these shall close the present chapter.

First, the Covenant has added a rose to Scotland's chaplet; it is the truest moral crown that has yet been bound round the forehead of the land, just as the Puritan struggle is the greatest in which England has ever been engaged. Before it there had been, indeed, the war of independence, and the reformation; but the first involved no religious element, and the second was very speedily and on the whole, easily determined: few battles were fought, and very few martyrs suffered. But the struggle of the Covenant not only stirred all the religious heart of the country, but it was waged with most determined courage for a quarter of a century and more. Besides, at the reformation, a large section of the nobles early connected themselves with the movement; whereas the cause of the Covenant was pleaded principally by the peasantry and small proprietors. Hence, to no passage in their history do genuine Scotchmen look back with such pride. You can see the eye of the shepherd sparkle and his cheek flush as you talk to him on his hill of these covenanting days. There is, perhaps, no one name among its heroes of whom you can say, as Burns of Wallace,—

> "At Wallace' name what Scottish blood
> But boils up in a spring-tide flood!"

the interest and the enthusiasm are diffused among many; but never are Cameron, Renwick, Peden, and Hackstoun, forgotten.

> "And far and near, o'er dale and hill,
> Are faces which attest the same,
> And kindle, like a fire new-stirred,
> At mention of their name."

No enthusiasm has followed equal to that, or which has had the power of eclipsing it in public regard. The Scottish people flung themselves into even the Reform

Bill and chartist agitations with greater spirit that the field-meetings then held, and the peculiar kind of popular excitement, and the prayer which was in the last of these often mixed up with politics and political assemblies, reminded them of Covenanting days. Some most excited political meetings were held in and near Edinburgh, in the years 1831, 1832, and 1834; and truly they were very furnaces of glowing and seething feeling. They were generally held in a park under the shadow of Salisbury Crags, and with Arthur's Seat watching grimly in his green shaggy coat behind. Many of the scenes interesting in Covenanting story were in sight: the Castle-rock, the Pentland-ridge, the hills of Fife, the ocean linking Dunottar Castle to the Bass; the Grassmarket, too, where the martyrs suffered was not far off. Very different, in many points, the objects sought by these fierce and heated throngs from those of their fathers; very different their own character and bearing—for at that desperate crisis, oaths and curses, both deep and loud, pervaded every multitude; very different the speakers, for they made no pretensions, in general, to even the appearance of piety. Yet still there was much that reminded you of the open-air meetings of the seventeenth century. The earnestness and terrible animation and daring language of the orators; the fixed brows, the compressed lips, and the flashing eyes of the hearers, none of whom bore arms, but each of whose hands seemed grasping an invisible sword; the wild, wave-like, tempestuous motion of the crowd; their thick cheers awakening the echoes of the rocks; the glories of nature adding their inestimable background, from the green pastures around up to the immeasureable calm of the May heaven above: all carried the mind two centuries back. Then there was the purpose visible and audible throughout, and the shadow of prospective rising and blood which lay over the assembly. And when one gifted man, (since well known as the author of Nimrod) alluded, both in that King's park and again at a meeting held in the Grassmarket itself, to the days of the Covenant, and spoke of the coming of new

Drumclogs and of more fortunate Bothwells, and pointed to the Pentlands and the Bass, the living furnace became heated seven times—now cheers rent the sky, and now a deep silence dissolved in a more terrible murmur, and the sun and the mountain-scenery seemed drawing in around the impassioned multitude, to witness the oath or to hear the amen of their resolute souls ; and it was felt that the manes of the murdered in the cause of liberty would soon be propitiated, and that the injured genius of a former age was already smiling down well pleased.

The success of the great covenanting struggle secured civil and religious liberty to Scotland. The apparent narrowness of the point to which the controversy seemed at last reduced, contributed to this result. Suppose, as episcopalians maintain, and as MacRie the younger, almost admits, in a passage already quoted, that it came, through the various indulgences granted, to little else than this question, "Surplice or no surplice? Liturgy or none?" Still the Covenanters could reply, "If this be a trifle, why urge it on us at such tremendous expenditure of blood and treasure? although it may be a trifle in itself it represents great questions—the surplice or liturgy is the contraction and symbol of mighty evils ; if we admit these, not only other evils of a more formidable kind may be afterwards introduced, but the authority of the magistrate over our consciences is conceded ; and if he once be permitted to be our tyrant in religious matters, what is to hinder him from becoming in civil affairs equally absolute? Therefore, on this little point we take our stand, and find here the narrow Thermopylæ of a wide cause!" Whether this reasoning was perfectly sound or not, mark the consequence that followed. On this little and, if it be so, vexatious, point—a great victory was gained. The government having failed on such a small matter, felt it for ever impossible, by persecution, to obtain greater. The empire of brute force received its final blow. From that day forward, the current set in, slowly but decidedly, toward larger and larger concessions to the rights of con-

science. Therefore, if the question be asked, Who broke in twain the yoke of the despotism in Scotland—Who secured the inviolability of conscience in that realm—Who paved the way for the abolition of patronage; aye and for the establishment of voluntary associations? the answer must be, "These noble hair-splitting men of the Covenant; although verily they knew not what they did." They aroused the land to a spiritual consciousness—to a feeling of the supremacy of scripture and of the moral sense; to an attention to the minutiæ of christianity—to the very fringes of the tabernacle, which has never since been permitted to die away, and which, while it has been productive of much small and captious evil, has been productive, on the whole, of a vast superabundance of good.

To that strong, unconquerable struggle we owe, also, many of those recent movements in the church, which, although troubling the waters have made them vitalizing. It was in the remaining might of the Covenanting spirit, that the fathers of the Secession came out, like Abraham from Haran, not knowing whither they went—though but four in number, strong in the firm negative of their position, full of faith and hate and zeal, doing well to be angry, and destined to create a sensation in Scotland which has not yet entirely subsided, and to found a sect which has acted and prospered for more than a hundred years. From a similar source sprang the Relief body, which has since, like a vigorous tributary, augmented the current of the Secession. To this, too, the Free Church will be proud to acknowledge its filial claims. Whatever may be thought of some of the actions of that body, and especially of its equivocal position in reference to the voluntary question—living on its fruits and yet ignoring its principle—holding, like Arminians, works without faith—none can fail to see in its movements, its energy and zeal, the after-growth of the rich field which the Covenanters cultivated.

The late amiable "Delta*," in a note to a poem of his,

* An eminent writer in Blackwood's Magazine, lately deceased.

entitled The Covenanters' Night Hymn, while condemning the prejudices, errors, and occasional crimes of this peculiar people, takes true and strong ground in their defence. He says, that, in the first place, they fought and gained the battle of an entire century; and, secondly, that their victory was the victory of the protestant cause in Scotland. Both these statements are correct. The Covenanters' struggle must not be judged from the duration of its darkest point, any more than the duration of an eclipse from the moment of its deepest obscuration. From the Reformation downwards to the settlement at the revolution, the conflict, in its merits and its blunders, its superabundant good and evil, was strictly *one;* and if the result has not been so absolutely unique, yet, unquestionably, it has been intimately intertwined with the success of the protestant religion. It was the extreme—at least the only extreme THEN possible in Scotland—of protestantism, which the Covenanters defended. For this they suffered and died; and although they gained not the full amount of their reiterated and blood-bought demand, the instalment they did obtain, like the sybil's books, was more valuable than the whole, and has become the germ of all the after protestantism of Scotland. It fared with them as with most Reformers. They wittingly or unwittingly sought for more than they were able or entitled to receive: they urged their question too far: they exaggerated the evils under which they were really suffering, and thus they secured a less complete, but a final, victory for the general cause.

Hence, to a great extent, the profound and practical hatred felt in Scotland against popery. There are no Smithfield fires in the Scotch annals, but they record the Covenanting persecutions carried on, not indeed in the first place by popery, but by its disguise—its alias—a disguise and an alias which our fathers in a larger degree were able to penetrate. They regarded it as the devil's creed and caricature of christianity; and its history as briefly this: that the infernal spirit saw that christianity

had come into the world, and was threatening to destroy his empire; that he said, "I must destroy it;" that he tried it first with fire, but in vain—the fire fell on it like rain; it grew the faster for the fire—the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church; that he then concocted a deeper and a darker scheme, and said, "I'll become a christian myself—I'll get myself baptised—I'll form and circulate a creed of my own;" and that thus popery arose as the devil's creed, and spread over the face of the church. To their minds popery presented itself as a monkey making mouths behind the back of a man, and they shrank in disgust and horror from the lame and blasphemous imitation. They saw in it a system at once diametrically opposite to, and ludicrously like, christianity, which had fastened its polluting grasp upon all the rites and the doctrines of the true religion; which for the real unity of the church in Christ had substituted the false centre of the pope; which had yoked dead works to living faith in the important matter of justification; which had, for the spiritual presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper substituted the revolting fiction of transubstantiation; which had degraded that mysterious spot "under the altar," where the souls of the righteous wait for the redemption of their bodies, into a vulgar vault of fire called purgatory; which had created for its own sensuous ends a female god, in the abused form of the Virgin Mary; which had snatched the cup from the lips, and the bible from the hands, of the laity, and given them a half-supper and no book of God at all; which had corrupted manly chastity into monachism, and temperance into austerity and abstinence; which had given to the clergy unlimited power over ears and hearts and consciences, at the same time that it bound them to their cause by the unnatural bands of celibacy, and which in every form had set itself to cement despotism—to oppose human progress, to dwarf the intellect of man, to inculcate persecution and breach of faith, and to deluge the earth with blood. What name, in their view, could describe at once the broad malignant antagonism, and the strange and impudent likeness which this

system bore to christianity, except the name, Antichrist, the often-predicted power who was to hinder the advance of the faith, to defer even the day of the Lord, who was to sit in the temple of God, shewing himself that he was God, and for the destruction of whom the Lord had reserved the breath of his own mouth, and the brightness of his own coming? And not only did the Covenanters succeed in rebutting the advances, whether open or concealed, of this anti-christian power, but they did more; they instilled into the minds of their children a hatred and scorn of it —a determination to do battle against it to the death, which are burning unmingled in most Scottish hearts still, and which ever and anon burst forth and make the crest of the "old red dragon" to tremble. In other countries, popery has been trifled with, opposed, ridiculed or hated according to the peculiarities of the national mind; but in Scotland, the repugnance to it has assumed the form of a universal and unconquerable loathing.

Another effect springing from the Covenant, was to produce a deep respect and warm attachment on the side of the people to their ministers. That this had its evils there can be no doubt. It did engender a certain superstitious reverence for the persons, the profession, the characters, and the preachings of ministers. Certain lingering traces of this feeling may still be remembered, as, for example, that the parish minister used to be regarded by many as a kind of ghost in black—children fled from him as he walked through the village—a certain fearful stillness pervaded its streets—unspeakable were the depths and angles of declension with which men bowed to him. On sabbath, his veriest platitudes, and his iteration of sermons for the twentieth time, were received with profound respect; and his faults, if faults he was admitted to have, were treated with wondrous lenity, if they did not, as was often the case, become models of conduct. It was with him as with Hotspur—

> "Speaking thick, which nature made his blemish,
> Became the accents of the valiant."

This was true of ordinary ministers. But if the minister possessed superior powers, or eloquence, or diligence, and piety, he became a god to his parishioners, and was regarded now with the warmest love, and now with the most undissembled terror. His word was law, and his very silence assumed an imperative mood. And yet this, although an evil, sprang from a good principle deeper still; it was the last instalment of the debt which had been accumulated in the days of the Covenant. Then the clergy, by the sacrifices they made, the sufferings they endured, the purity of their lives, the energy of their preaching, and their thorough identification with their flocks, impressed themselves on the affections of Scotland, and gained a glory to their order, the last ray of which has not yet wholly ceased to shine. How much people will forgive to and bear from those who really love them, live among them, and labour for them! In such a case, faults are regarded with the partial eyes of the brother, the friend, or the lover. Endurance, too, adds a dignity to the sufferer. It was a gleam, accordingly, from the "auld Scottish glory" of the Covenanting day, which shed more than common lustre on the grey head of the aged minister as he mounted the pulpit or the tent, which secured attention for the trembling speech of the young orator addressing audiences, some of whose veterans might remember Renwick, and trace a likeness between them, in the flushed cheek and ardent gesture; which surrounded the steps of the minister wherever he went with a peculiar halo of sacredness, and gave a certain grandeur even to his extravagances of language, his undue exercise of authority, or his bursts of passion. This is now to some extent over in all parts of Scotland; but it did, doubtless, while it lasted, much good. The respect for the clergy secured for the peasantry precisely that kind of stimulus to the intellect, and that information for the memory, which, at the time, they required. In some measure barbarians, they required a rather barbarous exertion of authority to reduce them to spiritual discipline. Thus, too,

were religious principles roughly but profoundly rivetted upon the minds of the people; and through this it was, that a system of education, very imperfect, indeed, pregnant with many evils, and which is now far behind the wants of the country and the age, was established and worked out with such success, that Scotland for a time was the best-instructed country in the world.

It were beside the purpose to dwell on the causes which have led to "the contempt of the protestant clergy," as old Eachard called it;—to the comparatively low degree in public estimation, to which, as a class, they have sunk —such causes as the prevalence of the infidel spirit—the spread of extreme political opinions among the lower orders, and of attachment to popery, or to a protestantism that stimulates it in the upper—the class-feelings which have distinguished the clergy—their outrageous *esprit-de-corps*—their obstinate clinging to exploded forms of speech and thought and worship—their frequent *hauteur* and bigotry—their no less frequent suppleness and subservience, now to a king, now to a mob, now to a bishop, and now to a congregation—the opposition they have so frequently given to the onward movements of society—the fact, in one word, that they have, unlike their brethren in the seventeenth century, not taken the lead and directed the genius of the age, but have rather hung as drags upon it. But granting all this, it may yet be maintained, in the first place, that the clergy are exerting more power, and that of a more legitimate kind, in Scotland, than in any other country under heaven—except, perhaps, America, where, however, their influence in the matter of slavery has become the curse of the land; and that secondly, this is in a great degree owing to the memory of, and to the deep impression made by, the ministers of the Covenant, as well as to the remains of their spirit and conduct, which are still found extant among their successors. Here our ministers practise all the pastoral and many of the public duties which their fathers voluntarily imposed on themselves. They preach perpetually, they visit the sick, they

call on their flocks, they teach the young, they superintend public and private schools, they engage, on all proper occasions, in public, political, civic, and professional movements, they take a part in the proceedings of church-courts, they read much, they write much, and like their fathers, too, they have often much to suffer from misappreciation, from calumny, from rudeness and ignorance, from the complication of labours we have described, and from the *res angusta domi*—an evil which is now almost equally divided among ALL the different denominations of christians in the north. But these labours and difficulties form, in part, the chains which bind the office of the ministry in the present, even as heavier difficulties did still more strongly bind it in the past, to the respect, affection, and sympathy of a large portion of the Scottish people.

The Covenanting struggle, again, was a grand testimony to the truth of the christian religion. More than all stereotyped evidences—more than the writings of all the apologists, from Tertullian down to the most recent defender of the Christian faith, as a proof of the reality of christianity, was this living, blood-stained moorland-page. To prove christianity by argument seems an attempt as contemptible and hopeless, as to bottle up some of the foam-drops of a spring-tide, and show them as a specimen and proof how high these waters once ascended. Or it is like preserving a little of the air of a hurricane. The real proofs of christianity are to be found in the effects which it has produced, is producing, and promises to produce; and, whenever we see a mass of people moving to the power of religion, as the "trees of the wood to the wind," we see an evidence not easily to be gainsaid, of the influence of christianity upon the heart, the conscience, and the character of mankind —to which elements, indeed, and to which alone it has ever appealed—the only fields in which it has sown, or expected, or reaped a true crop. It is this kind of proof which has made the deepest impression, both upon the

popular and upon the thoughtful mind. Religion, as an idea, rather tends to stupefy and overwhelm us—we cannot understand it—it seems at once far from us and near, like the telescopic moon; but let it once be *realized*—let our own hearts feel it, or even hear of others who have really felt it, and it ceases to be a mystery and becomes a living fact. Even a single heart feeling and acting on christian principle, is a distinct evidence in favour of the christian religion. But how that evidence grows at more than an arithmetical ratio, when an age, a century, embraces and to a certain extent incarnates it in life, action, and suffering! That psalm at Drumclog—that short, terrible struggle at Airsmoss—those death-scenes at the Grassmarket, intended at first as evidences of sincere protestantism—have now sublimated into proofs of the common "faith as it is in Jesus," and their records are or should be admitted among the general archives of the christian religion. When was there ever, or when shall there ever be, a great suffering for the sake of the infidel cause? How Voltaire and Rousseau cringed and crouched before the dangers to which they were exposed! How Hume himself would have shuffled had he been called to answer for his "ideas and impressions of religion!" And suppose our modern sceptics subjected to a "*fiery trial*," we can conceive results rather ludicrous than calculated to confirm the common notions of their sincerity and enthusiasm. One would prove himself innocent by eating up in haste his most daring words; another, by "quartering" the favourite child of his brain; a third, by swearing an "alibi" for his senses while he had been engaged in such and such an obnoxious work; a fourth, by withdrawing word after word of his statements, till they were made to turn right round, and to say at last the contrary of what they had seemed to say at first, (like the famous garment of Scriblerus, originally of silk, but which by frequent darnings became at last of worsted, and yet remained metaphysically the same!); and a fifth, with "impudent face" and "brazen forehead, refusing to be

ashamed" by retorting the charge of infidelity upon his accusers, and attempting to show that HE had been nearer the Wondrous Sham,—the "Great Carbuncle,"* than any christian on earth. But would one of them for their theories of "the everlasting yea and no," or the supremacy of moral law, or the "oversoul," or the "church of the Saviour," submit to a month's privations? and how much less to long sullen rains of fire, famine, and nakedness, to peril and sword, to banishment, to contumely more intolerable than death, or death itself in its ghastliest and least ideal forms? God forbid that such measures as these should ever be put in force against sceptics! But few can be blind, nevertheless, to the assurance of their own eyes and judgments, that were such measures applied either to infidels or to nominal christians, there would now-a-days be bootikins with no legs within them, empty scaffolds, walls of fire containing nothing, and an infinitely greater number of retractations than of dying protests—many Cranmers signing their recanting deeds, but few burning in the flames the traitor hands which had signed them.

That the Covenanting contest, in fine, served to promote what is well called *vital* religion in Scotland, appear undoubted. That principle, previously feeble, drowned in formalisms, and too often held in deceit and unrighteousness, was, by a long persecution, driven into the heart of the nation, and has never yet been entirely expelled. We grant, again, most distinctly, that there is a vast difference between the godliness of the seventeenth and that of the nineteenth centuries in our land. That in the first found but one channel—the prosecution of the cause of Covenanted reformation; the other has diverged into manifold and sometimes contradictory courses. It would not be well for any enthusiast in the cause of the Covenant,

* See (although the reference in the text is not to *him*), Hawthorne's Twice-told Tales, in which a "Great Carbuncle" seems to represent his notion that christianity is a beautiful, impossible dream.

whether from England or from abroad, to repair NOW to one of our rural districts, even on sacramental occasions, in order to judge of the calibre, or the sincerity, or the intelligence of Scotland's piety. Truly it is a winter sun that he must be prepared to see. The services of the "preliminary" days, as they are called, of the Communion, as well as of all the rest, are now conducted entirely in the church. The tent—once a remaining rag of the Covenanting banner—latterly, a mere signal of distress, is extinct. The people flock to the church with perfect punctuality, but with listless looks. They sit before the preacher not as hearers, not as partaking of the same burning enthusiasm, for there is little on either side, but either as formal worshippers or as meagre and captious *critics*. Some listen, some look, some sleep, some yawn, some note down objectionable and others favourite passages; the question with some is, at the end, "How long has he been?" and with others, "Has he not said something against the standards of our faith?" In the Covenanting days, one watchman on the hills kept the congregation, now a half of the congregation becomes a company of watchmen, to keep itself from imaginary and ridiculous danger. The old rote and routine of sentiment and of language still prevail. It is as if the earth had stood, and opinion been frozen up, for two hundred years. Not a word that recognizes the new earth now below our feet, and the new heavens which now expand above, is ever heard or would be suffered were it heard. When you look, you see faces like those of the dead staring at you; and when you listen, you hear tones of the sepulchre reverberating on your ears. The worst of it is, that the men are often clever and conceited persons, imagining that their view of religion is the only one possible among the good at present—that all who do not preach it are heretics, and that all who come not up to the very letter of its requirements are in imminent "danger of hell fire." At the close of the day, and as the multitudes return them to their homes, it is with deep sadness that you follow in their

progress over hills and through morasses—some talking of "bullocks," others of the weather, others of politics—many comparing preachers with preachers, and giving almost uniformly the preference to the worst; and others indulging in a saturnalia of thought and language, which grieves you the more that you know that it has been purchased at the expense of much "tear and wear" of conscience, habitude, and heart.

Subtracting, however, all this, we see a certain thing called True Religion subsisting amongst us, and which, on the whole, may be traced rather to the influence of Covenanting days than to aught later in our land. There are still noble hearts among the peasantry, in spite of narrowness and vulgarity of views and feelings, and among the artizans, although infidelity has laid its withering grasp upon many of them. In the middle ranks, again, there is a great amount of manly and enlightened piety. A sober evening light of devotion pervades many portions of the country—the relict radiance of that fervid Covenanting noon, and it is remarkable that it is found precisely in those districts which were most zealous in the Covenanting cause—in the south and west. The great centre of Scottish religion is the city of Glasgow. This is the mighty heart which supplies all the veins and supports all the pulsations of our spiritual life. Edinburgh, with all its intelligence, is a cold, sceptical, and heartless city. From the influence of David Hume's atheism, it has passed into the shadow of the modified materialism of Combe. Religion is indeed able to maintain its ground, but little more, and dwells too evidently in an enemy's country, sneered at by one species of philosophers, and ostentatiously patronized by another, finding many partizans in every quarter of the city, but not pervading it all like a transforming leaven. In Glasgow it is very different; it is, perhaps, the most christian city on earth. A vast amount of wickedness of course, and infidelity there is in it, but the pulse of the town is true—its heart is sound—evangelical religion free from bigotry abounds, and in it, almost all Scottish

schemes of protestant christian philanthropy either take their rise or find their most efficient support. The spectacle of Glasgow on a Sabbath morning, is one of the most delightful kind; the streets are all in flood, and are all pouring in the one direction of the house of God: masses of the middle-class, grave parents leading perhaps their children by the hand; active, alert, intelligent young men; graceful and interesting females, mingled with multitudes of well-dressed working-men, all apparently seeking "the way to Zion with their faces thitherward;" nor is there the slightest appearance of that starched formalism and grim morosity of which the Scotch were once accused. It is a "cheerful godliness," that their countenances and their conversation discover; and while great is their faith and great their charity, yet to them the "greatest of these is *Hope*." It may be fairly admitted that the fashion of the town, use and wont, the influence of Chalmers and other causes may have combined in producing this state of things, and that with it, as with all outward displays of piety, much hollowness and hypocrisy are mingled. But we attribute more still to the influence of the seventeenth century. Glasgow has been peopled, in a great measure, from the surrounding counties, all of which were saturated with the Covenanting spirit and soaked with the martyrs' blood; and their descendants have not, even amid the crowded thoroughfares of the towns, forgotten the glorious solitudes where their fathers worshipped and died; and, after deducting the necessary amount of pretence and affectation of piety, there seems to remain an ample and a pure residuum. A gentleman of a sceptical turn, once inquired of a Scottish minister, "Do you know any now who believe in christianity?—of course every body admits it to be the best thing we have got; but do you know any who believe in its peculiar claims as the one divine religion? I, for my part, meet with none." The reply was, waiving the personal affront implied in the question, that not only did he know many individuals of high intelligence who did believe in the highest pretensions of the

christian religion, but that there was Glasgow, a city pervaded and penetrated by living, moving, and having its being in a profound belief of evangelical religion.

How long this may continue is an inquiry which suggests fears and gloomy forebodings in consequence of that cloud of scepticism which has covered the continent with its gross darkness, which has crept like a mist over large portions of the community both in Scotland and England, at last folding its fearful mantle round the country of the Covenant, and changing the character of Glasgow, till it becomes worse than one of our English large towns ; but the certainty is not more manifest than is the temporariness of this eclipse. Whatever may be the case with other countries, Scotland can never long part with the blessed faith of Jesus. Were infidelity or were popery becoming rampant in it, it were enough to move the ashes of the dead ; the tomb of Knox might be disturbed ; the bones of Bothwell Moor might come together, bone to his bone, once more an exceeding great army ; Cameron might spring from his mossy grave ; the German ocean might render back Burley and the rest of the brave dead which were in it ; and on the grim Grassmarket might reappear the array of the men who had thence ascended, amid execrations and agonies, the nearest way to the Celestial gate. At all events, the slumbering embers of the spirit and the fire of the martyrs would be blown up into a blaze ; and, even were the church once more driven into the wilderness, she would keep her post and maintain her quarrel there till the time came when, on the wings of a great eagle, she should again emerge, and endowed with new life, and purified from old error, shine forth " fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

No easy thing, verily, can it be to root out a religion, which, apart from its own transcendent claims, has interwoven itself around the heartstrings of a nation, mingled with its earliest and dearest associations, coloured the thought, the feeling, the very blood of the land, become a

source of innumerable traditions, brought the national character to its culminating point, and been baptized, again and again, in holy blood. It is true that a "thing of beauty is a joy for ever," but it is still more so, that a thing once believed on good evidence to be divine, and which has surrounded itself with divine trophies, is independent of time, may be darkened, but cannot be destroyed, may even set like the sun, but like the sun can only set to rise again in greater splendour than before, and shall remain a joy, a power, a truth, and a terror for evermore. Honour, again, to those men whose efforts have tended to cement and to strengthen such a system; and in reference to whose sufferings, and to the results which have already and shall yet more richly spring from them, may be applied the poet's line—

"How that red rain has made the harvest grow!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TREATMENT THE COVENANTERS HAVE RECEIVED IN AFTER TIMES.

All that great men, or great causes, demand from their own age or from posterity is not favour nor flattery but simple justice. And yet it is singular, but inevitable, to notice that justice is precisely that which they receive at the latest period, if ever they receive it at all. Abuse is surely and rapidly theirs, partisan attachment, amounting even to idolatry, seldom fails to track their steps; but to the cry of their souls from under the altar for "justice," there is often only a late and a partial reply. Deep is the truth in the strong line of Shakspeare,—

"The great soul of the world is just."

But it is not a rule without exceptions. And, like certain chancellors, that same "great soul," although a just judge, is wondrously slow in passing his final decisions.

The Covenant was unfortunate, on the whole, in its first historians, such as Calderwood, Shields, and Woodrow. Honest and faithful scribes these were; but they wanted every element of the historian, except bare literal truth. They had no imagination, no style, little pictorial power, and of philosophic generalisation they were entirely destitute. It fared otherwise with the great English rebellion. The history of the cavaliers, at least, had more than full justice done to it in that exquisite and seductive book of pictures, called Clarendon's History. On the other

side, too, there were Mrs. Hutchinson's Memoirs and many other interesting tractates containing fractions of the puritanic story. And, indeed, it seems a strong argument in favour of the general righteousness of the Covenanting cause, that the mere rugged outline of its history in Woodrow's page, unadorned with one flower of fancy, unanimated by one spark of eloquence, has excited such interest, and is still wielding considerable power. Defoe also has written a history of these disastrous times, full of his inimitable touches, but the popularity of which has not been equal to its merit, or to the renown of his other works. The books called Naphtali and The Cloud of Witnesses, while full of essential grandeur, were cast in a form and clothed in language not at all calculated to attract the generality of readers. But the most popular record of the Covenanting day has been the *Scottish Worthies*, written by Howie, of Loch-goin. It is a curious medley, full of interesting facts, indicating a pious spirit, and great zeal for the cause, but full of misstatements and exaggerations, which discover the most amiable and ample credulity, and disfigured by one hideous chapter, entitled God's Judgments against Persecutors, in which all the bile and bitterness engendered by twenty-eight years of persecution are collected into one black draught, and where the elements of charity and of truth are alike, to a great degree, wanting.

Many causes, in the course of the eighteenth century, combined to render the Covenanters and their memory unpopular. There had been a great deal about their manners and habits that was repulsive. They had lived, spoken, and acted, as those that were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Their successors retained these repulsive and solitary habitudes, (as it appeared to others,) without any real occasion, and certainly without the energy and sublimation of the Covenanting spirit. What was not only pardonable, but venerable, in those great originals, became, in the eyes of many, ludicrous and con-

temptible in their imitators. The severity of morals too, and the strictness of discipline which the presbyterian ministers observed, roused many enemies against them. After the union, the comparative laxity of English manners and modes of thought began slowly, but surely, to sap the foundations on which reverence for the Covenanters had rested. More lately, the unpopularity of the first kings of the house of Brunswick, deepened the growing dislike to the "whigs," and led to a violent reaction in behalf of the Stewarts—a reaction expressed in two rebellions. Meanwhile, a strong party was rising in the Scottish church, whose views on the subject of church-polity were in direct opposition to those of the Covenanters; whose religious creed, although their formula was the same, was shrewdly suspected to be *toto cœlo* distant from theirs, and who insensibly began to instil a contempt for their fathers into the crude intelligence of the land. Above all, the young art, genius, and culture of our country, poisoned by English or French influences, recoiled alike from the inner spirit and the outer form of the presbyterian cause, failed to see the elements of sublimity which lay in both, and were too prone to catch and dwell on the merely ridiculous aspects, which both presented when viewed at a certain angle, and through a certain lens.

The poetry and the poets of Scotland, during the eighteenth century, were, on the whole, anything but religious. To this, Robert Blair, the author of The Grave, and Beattie, are splendid exceptions. But the three most popular of the Scottish poets of that age were Allan Ramsay, Robert Ferguson, and Robert Burns. The one was a maker and seller of wigs, who *had* poetry, as he had other articles and essences in his perfumery shop; who possessed an eye for observing with minute accuracy, and a style for expressing, with admirable *vraisemblance*, many of the aspects of Scottish scenery and manners, but to whom all true elevation and enthusiasm of nature were denied. What could he do to celebrate the deeds

of the Covenanting heroes? The rows and riots of the Grassmarket were far dearer to him than its historical reminiscences. His Gentle Shepherd is an exquisite picture of the Scotch pastoral character, *minus* its religion; while his smaller poems are often full of indecency. Robert Ferguson was a fine-hearted, ill-fated "writer-chiel," who knew no medium between severe labour and deep drinking, and like indulgences, and who died young. He had, unquestionably, a natural vein, especially of homely picture-writing, and light, sharp-glancing wit. But neither his powers, nor his temperament, nor his habits, fitted him to undertake the great subject of the Covenanting struggle, and his allusions to religious topics are few, and shew either absolute ignorance or powerless hatred. He learned, ere he died, to think otherwise, in the school of an asylum! Peace and forgiveness to his memory!

Robert Burns was a man of altogether a different order. With more than Ramsay's power of minute and literal description, with an ineffably stronger and richer satiric vein than Ferguson, he possessed what they had not—an intellect of vast perspicacity, and an imagination, in compass, vividness, and exuberance, only inferior to that of the Dantes, Shaksperes, and Miltons. He had been brought up, too, in Ayrshire, with a thousand traditions of the Covenant still ringing around him. He had been educated in a religious atmosphere. One might have imagined from this, and from the wild "idiot piety," to use his own words, which beat in his young heart, that he was the man to have done poetic justice to the Covenanters. This, however, various causes prevented. His father, although a good man, was attached to the moderate or Arminian side of the church, and probably influenced the mind of his son. Burns, having fallen early into an error, felt, and never forgave, the strong hand of the purity of Scotland's ecclesiastical discipline. There was much too in the conduct, manners, and language of the westland saints, which tended to provoke laughter

when it did not excite disgust. Hence the enthusiasm of the young bard evaded the Covenanting days, and reverted to an earlier period of our history—to the memorable struggle of Sir William Wallace, and hence he became early committed to a witty warfare with calvinists and the stricter presbyterians. We should remember, too, that his father had come from the north, and had transmitted to his son Jacobite tendencies, as well as strong prejudices against the opposite party. There is not, accordingly, so far as we remember, one allusion in all Burns' poetry to the battles of the Covenant. He has sung, as no one else could, Bannockburn, Drummossie Moor (Culloden), and the heroes who pressed on "red-wat shod," at the side of Wallace; but not a word of the dark muirlands of his own county, where the mighty men of God fought and fell. What a loss has this been! Had our greatest national poet possessed in but a small degree the religious spirit of his country, in what poems might he have expressed and immortalized it! What justice, "heaped up, pressed down, shaken together, and running over," had he done to the memory of our fathers! What spirit-stirring songs or lyrics had he written on these then virgin themes! Conceive his pæan over Drumclog, his lament for Bothwell, or his elegy over Cameron's grave! But he had fallen, alas! on a low and evil age. He found the cant of the Covenant remaining, but much of its real enthusiasm and depth of feeling withdrawn. He drank the dregs of the cup, found them foul and bitter, and never dreamed that it had once overflowed with a genuine and godlike draught. In proportion, too, as his own vices confirmed their grasp upon him, his hatred of hypocrisy and of religion grew equally, and both were confounded together in his unsparing satire. His treatment of such themes as The Holy Fair, The Ordination, The Unco' Guid, &c., shews a bitter determination to root out the very last vestiges of the old presbyterian spirit. It is a war contracted and exasperated by various causes into a personal quarrel. And there can

be no doubt that he has, in these poems, grossly exaggerated the absurd aspects of the scenes. He has done so by omitting all that was solemn, and preserving all that was ludicrous and inconsistent, in them. He has in these become, with most satirists, a one-sided painter, and his pictures are rather distinguished for their boldness and force than for their accuracy. In Holy Willie's Prayer, and some of his other smaller poems, there burns a yet more inveterate and coarser hostility. But let him have praise for The Cottar's Saturday Night—a poem not only interesting, as a perfect picture of an old custom of Scotland, handed down from Covenanting days, and which still widely prevails, but as casting a pleasing light on the interior of the poet's heart, and suggesting what, in happier circumstances and under another star, he might have become. Poor fellow! He did certainly, in Dumfries, sink very low; he associated with vile persons, and made himself viler than they; the noble vessel got on fire—its guns began to go off—and it became positively dangerous to approach it. His eloquence, once so pure, even in its wildness and mirth, was turned into a hideous compost of filth and fire, and the mouth which once chanted The Cottar's Saturday Night on the Sabbath day to his entranced brother Gilbert, became an open sepulchre, vomiting out obscenity, blasphemy, fierce ribaldry and invective. Still, although stern truth compels us to write these "bitter things" against him, let us grant his original nobility of nature, admit part, at least, of the plea usually put in on account of his temperament, his circumstances, and his sore temptations, be thankful for the mass of pure and noble poetry he has left behind him, and never forget that, in one of the last scenes of his life, while pacing the beach of the Solway Firth—a poor, pallid, broken-hearted, dying man—the Bible was his constant companion, commanding, we trust, his belief, and soothing the accumulated sorrows and painful wounds of his unhappy spirit.

Contemporaneous with Burns, there existed, in Edin-

burgh, a school of philosophers who had not, nor pretended to have, any respect or sympathy with our heroic fathers. This was, perhaps, the coldest-blooded school which ever speculated on earth. All were men of eminent ability; but heart, enthusiasm, religion, or sympathy with it, a true or deep feeling of the poetical, whatever their intellectual perception of it might be, were entirely wanting. Such were Hume, Adam Smith, Hugh Blair, Lord Kaimes, Robertson, Dugald Stewart, and the rest —men among whom Burns moved like a fiery panther among polar bears, dripping with the cold slush of the Arctic sea. Hume was a pyrrhonist—he swam in a circle of everlasting doubt. Smith seems never to have thought earnestly on the subject of religion at all. Blair rose to a certain half-heathen morality, and was arrested and frozen up there. Lord Kaimes was still more thoroughly a pagan. Robertson could lead a church, but seemed to know little of the christian religion; and his histories, though elegant, display no sympathies with the higher principles of humanity: like the Russian ice-palace, they "smile and they are cold." Dugald Stewart had taste without genius, and, although his heart was in the right place, and his accomplishments great, the power he wielded was rather pernicious than otherwise to the cause of christianity; he kept it, and taught his students to keep it, at arm's length. It was impossible that the memory of a period of earnest belief should be cherished by men like these; and although none of them approved of the conduct of the persecutors, nor cared openly to attack the Covenanters, yet when they alluded to them it was with cool contempt, and their general influence served to damp and extinguish the spirit from which alone true appreciation of their merits could spring. Great as the talents of these men were, and valuable as are some of the written results of their speculation, such as The Wealth of Nations and the Histories of England and America, it may be truly said that not more certainly did the irruption of the northern tribes,

at the end of the Roman Empire, arrest the civilization of Europe, than did the deluge of snow, sent abroad by these Frenchified Scotchmen retard the moral and spiritual advancement of our country.

No poet hitherto had set the deeds of these "fanatics," as they were usually called, to music. Robert Blair had instead sung the ghastly glories of the grave; Beattie had traced the progress of a poet's soul in his beautiful Minstrel; Thomson had swept the circle of the Seasons and returned to lounge on the enchanted beds of The Castle of Indolence. It was reserved for James Grahame, the author of The Sabbath, to sound the first key-note of those many melodies of praise which have saluted their memories since.

James Grahame, as the first laureate of the Covenant, demands more than a mere hurrying word. He was a native of Glasgow, and studied at the university there. He then removed to Edinburgh, and became an advocate. From early life, however, he had entertained a dislike to the profession of the law, and aspired to that of a clergyman. In the year 1809, when he had already reached his forty-fifth year, he gained the desire of his heart, by entering holy orders as a clergyman of the Church of England. He went south, and occupied various curacies in that church. His health, however, failed; his hopes of happiness and of promotion in his profession were grievously disappointed, and, within two years of his ordination, he came back to his beloved Scotland, "a withered flower," and returned to die. In his native city, on the 14th of September, 1811, he breathed his last.

James Grahame was himself a remarkable man, and was fortunate, besides, in his circle of friends. Campbell the poet knew him intimately; as did Jeffrey, and both in their memoirs speak of him with great affection and esteem. Professor Wilson has poured out a most beautiful and melting monody over his grave. He is described as a man of magnificent presence, of mild manners, of amiable temper, of sensitive disposition, and of a piety the most

ardent and sincere. Campbell mentions Grahame as returning with him (after having sat up all night) from an excursion to Arthur's Seat to see the sun rise, and ere going to bed, pouring out the devotion of his heart in an extempore hymn, to which the bard of hope "never heard anything equal." His genius was of a mildly-pensive and elegantly-descriptive kind. He had little constructive or dramatic faculty, his powers of reflection were rather feeble, nor does he ever mount into the seventh heaven of invention. His qualities were warm-hearted enthusiasm, deep-toned piety, and a rare truth and beauty of description. In touches, equally forceful and felicitous, of natural painting, he is not surpassed by Cowper or Thomson. As if in mere absence of mind he drops the brush upon the canvass, and thus produces exquisite effects. His poetry is on the whole rough and bare—a Scottish moorland—but has bright pools like eyes sprinkled on it, and little clumps of golden gorse, making the solitary place glad. It is unnecessary to criticise his Birds of Scotland, or his British Georgics, though there are some beautiful passages, which relieve the dry didactics of the latter. One is exceedingly characteristic of the author, and of his passionate love for his native land.

"How pleasant comes thy rushing, silver Tweed,
Upon mine ear, when, after roaming long
In southern plains, I reach'd thy lovely banks!
How bright, renowned Sark, thy little stream,
Like ray of column'd light chasing a shower,
Would cross my homeward path! How sweet the sounds
When I, to hear the Doric tongues reply,
Would ask thy well-known name!

But the poem which secures his fame, as well as justifies the introduction of his name into this volume, is unquestionably The Sabbath. This, like his other poems, is unequal, has little art, skill, or unity, and abounds in prosaic passages. All this, however, is not sufficient to counterbalance its pleasing and various merit. It is a poem which has moved Scotland to its depths. The title

so suggestive to every christian heart; the sweetness of the opening lines, beginning

> "How still the morning of the hallowed day,"

the fervour of the piety, unmingled with a particle of cant; the fine catholicity of the spirit; the beauty of the natural descriptions, and the nice individual strokes of picturesque power, have combined to render it a first favourite with the religious classes. But even more has its popularity been owing to its pictures of the Covenanting days. Grahame found in this an untouched field, and he has ploughed it with great vigour and effect. The haunts of the persecuted, among hills

> "Where rivers, there but brooks,
> Dispart to different seas;"

the field-preachings, where the Word was

> "By Cameron thundered, or by Renwick poured
> In gentle stream;"

the darker times, when the people dared no longer to meet in face of day, but had to shelter under the midnight canopy, are described in the most plaintive and powerful manner. It was the first, and remains the most beautiful, libation poured upon the tomb of the martyrs. What added to its gracefulness and power was that Grahame when he wrote it was a member, and soon after became a minister, in the episcopalian communion. True genius never did, never can, and never shall, in reality, belong to any party. Grahame died in the prime of life, with a broken constitution and, probably, a broken heart. But even on his premature deathbed, it must have ministered deep consolation to his spirit, that he had linked together, by the tie of an imperishable poem, two subjects of paramount interest and peculiar charm to every christian Scotchman, and to many in other lands—the sabbath and the great struggle of the Covenant.

For fifteen years—from 1802 to 1817—the subject lay "unattempted in prose or rhyme," in fiction or in history.

MacRie, in the meantime, had written his masterly life of Knox—a book which not only redeemed the reformer's character from much unmerited obloquy, but formed the preface of a great apology for the presbyterian cause in general, and came like a blow on the face of that semi-infidel moderatism which prevailed in the philosophy and theology of the time. The tone, indeed, was partial, and the defence overdone; but even this seemed necessary for the accomplishment of the result at which he aimed. Chalmers, too, had awoke from his preliminary slumbers and vague scientific dreams; had, amidst the hills of Fife, aroused the ancient spirit of the Covenanting era, and was making bearded men weep and thrill and tremble, as if to the trumpet of a mightier Cameron, or to the wizard-lyre of a more enthralling Gillespie. At this period, the subject flashed before the eye of the almost only man then living in Scotland qualified to do it complete artistic justice: we mean Sir Walter Scott.

It would fall without the scope of this volume, to attempt an elaborate disquisition on the character and genius of Scott. Indeed it would be on other accounts a superfluous task. Who sits down and paints portraits of the sun? Yet it may not be amiss to acknowledge the "debt immense of endless gratitude" due to this surpassing writer. It is not so much as a teacher that he is to be regarded, and not at all as a prophet. He has not been a guide to the feet of many; but he has been to millions the most genial, delightful, and joy-giving companion, save Shakspere, they have ever encountered in the wilderness of this world. He has not strode on before and haughtily told men to follow—he has not spurned them away—he has not wrapt himself up in mystical clouds, and only now and then broken out like an apparition. He has walked side by side, and kept up a constant stream of interesting and instructive conversation. His works have peopled many a solitude, increased the sweetness of society, blended delightfully with severer studies, and at each perusal have rendered men more in love with nature, with humanity,

and with the broad-minded and kind-hearted author. Scarce a year passes in which many do not read the principal of them over again; with a conviction that they shall never tire of them till their dying day. The hearts of those men are not particularly holy, they are simply extinct, which can contemplate without wonder, love, and gratitude, the contributions of Scott to the great literary stock of the world, in their manhood—their health—their infinite variety—their sweet-blooded tone—their spirit of charity and friendship for all classes and ranks of man—their respect for the great general laws of morality and religion, for the primal principles and feelings of human nature—their characters so numerous, so new, so stamped with individuality, and bursting at every pore with life—the representation they give of past ages, so perfect that you find truth in the garb of fiction, instead of, as often with historians, fiction masquerading under the trappings of truth—the inimitable descriptions of nature which abound, so chaste and rich and cool, and fluttering like green leaves around the most torrid passages and passions of the story—and those higher and subtler touches, less frequent, but which discover in Scott a depth never fully dug, but only surpassed among mortal men by Shakspere himself. Nor is this estimate affected by the declaration of Carlyle, that Scott has only amused the public, and produced a mere series of studies for after-dinner loungers. Does the bagpipe heard from afar among the highland-hills, or does the trumpet blowing its war-blast minister nothing but amusement? Who has not been stirred and strengthened, braced and cheered, made a better and a wiser man, by the perusal of the works of Scott? No, unquestionably, it is not for purposes of mere delectation to loungers that such piles of head and heart as Sir Walter's are accumulated in this world—that such gifts are conferred, that such industry is excited to work them out, and that the race with but few exceptions has welcomed their precious results. And, with all admiration for the genius of the

detractor, it is safe to predict, that, after his barbarous beauties, truculent sarcasms, and fierce assaults on men and systems, are remembered only by retired scholars, and after the large icy sun of his idol, Goethe, has dwindled into a telescopic star, Scott's popularity will remain undiminished, nay extended; and that, not only in Europe, but in every land where literature continues to exist—in the vast Australian realms—in Japan and China, then opened to the full power of civilization—amid the isles of the Pacific, and among the iron-ribbed rocks of Iceland, his name will be ranked with those of Homer and Shakspere, as one of the first three of the family of human genius.

It was natural that one so intimately acquainted with the history of Scotland should be attracted to a period and to characters so peculiarly interesting as those of the Covenant. Indeed, there is reason to believe, from a jotting in Byron's life of an interrupted conversation with Scott, that he had intended the Covenanters as the subject of his first novel. We may speculate what would have been the reception of that, if it had been Old Mortality instead of Waverley. Probably the odium, although not more intense, yet not being diverted by the previous reputation of the anonymous author, might have fallen with greater *momentum*, and perhaps for a time crushed the book and stopped the series. Even in Waverley the author seems meditating an assault upon the presbyterian party. Witness his picture of Ebenezer Cruickshank—the host of the candlestick—and especially his treatment of another character, "the gifted Gilfillan." Of this last person indeed we have only a head and shoulders, instead of a full-length portrait. The butt-end of Donald Bean's gun has turned him into a Torso; but had the sketch been extended, we should have found a character somewhat similar to Burley, with vainer, weaker, and more ludicrous points, but equally brave, bigoted, self-centred, and self-seeking. "He was a thin, dark, rigid-looking man, about sixty years of age. The spiritual pride which in mine host of the candlestick mantled in a sort of supercilious hypocrisy

was in this man's face elevated and yet darkened by genuine and undoubting fanaticism. It was impossible to behold him without imagination placing him in some strange crisis where religious zeal was the ruling principle. A martyr at the stake, a soldier in the field, a lonely and banished wanderer, consoled by the intensity and supposed purity of his faith under every earthly privation; perhaps a persecuting inquisitor, as terrific in power as unyielding in adversity; any of these seemed congenial characters to this personage. With these high traits of energy there was something in the affected precision and solemnity of his deportment and discourse that bordered upon the ludicrous; so that, according to the mood of the spectator's mind, and the light in which he presented himself, one might have feared, admired, or laughed at him." With this description, his conversation on the road, his treatment of the prisoner, and his intrepid defence when suddenly assailed entirely correspond. It seems, indeed, in brief, the expression of Scott's idea of the covenanting character, the rude germ which he afterwards developed, the first sitting to the elaborate portrait which he afterwards drew.

In Old Mortality, he spread a broader canvass, and brought to the task all his marvellous powers. It is, unquestionably, one of the highest of his efforts. With no passages equal to some in Waverley and The Antiquary—infinitely less *pleasing* than Guy Mannering—not a unique and magnificent dream, like Ivanhoe—and with no such profound soundings of the human heart as are to be found in the story of Jeanie Deans, Ravenswood, and Kenilworth, it is unrivalled in breadth, brilliance, the contrast of character, in martial spirit, in striking adventure, and in the compact unity and terrible projection of the figure of Burley. Lockhart calls it the Marmion of his novels: an epithet which does not fully express its character; since the power of Marmion is condensed in two or three transcendent passages, while that of Old Mortality beats with a strong pulse throughout the whole.

And what must be said of the treatment the Cove-

nanters have received at Scott's hand? Here it seems right to steer an intermediate course—to avoid the Charybdis of the Quarterly Review on the one hand, and the Scylla of Dr. MacRie on the other. It is not probable, then, in the first place, that Scott was animated by such an intense and virulent animosity against the Covenanters as has been supposed. Many speak as if all Claverhouse had been slumbering in his breast, and insinuate that he chose the subject of Old Mortality solely for the purpose of basing on it a laboured and wilfully false attack on the memory of our fathers. This is not credible. Scott was a "good hater," but incapable of deliberate and long-drawn malice. He had strong prejudices and passions, but neither against individuals nor parties can we conceive him cherishing slow, burning, vindictive resentments. It is more probable that his attractions to the subject were simply its historic interest, and the opportunity it afforded him of exercising his favourite powers; and that he sat down to Old Mortality, as to his other novels, with little definite plan or purpose at all; and least of all with the intention of systematically and with pains blackening the memory of any party. But, again, it may be granted, that Scott had imbibed strong prejudices against the Covenanters, which, finding this channel open, ran too readily and recklessly along it. His father, indeed, was a rather rigid religionist; but the son had been brought up in the atmosphere, partly of Edinburgh *persiflage* and scepticism, and partly of Border enthusiasm: the mixture of something of the Jeffrey and something of the Leyden element in Scott, with a dash besides of highland superstition and Jacobite prejudice, rendered himself a singular compound, and accounts for his unfitness fully to sympathise with the narrow, intense current of genuine earnestness which ran in the presbyterian veins. Yet his enthusiasm, although very different from that of the Covenanters, (being that rather of *class* and country than of *cause*) prevented him from treating them as mere subjects of scorn. His Edinburgh training might have suggested unmitigated ridicule, but his

Border blood and poetic fire interposed, and compelled him to blend with it a certain respect and admiration. Hence, thirdly, his novel unquestionably "halts between two opinions." Like Balaam, he comes to curse and he remains to bless. He is, like many men of genius, overruled by the o'ermastering power behind him. He awakens a demon to which he is compelled to be obedient. The fine instinct in him works out of its original atmosphere, casts it off as the sun a ring of clouds, and pours involuntary and, therefore, more precious glory upon his subject. Moreover, most of the people of Scotland were not fair judges. Taught and trained in unbounded reverence for their forefathers, they were prepared to fasten on every word and syllable that told against them, to find the blame outrageous, and the praise null. They judged of the work from its particular scenes, from its apparent purpose, and not from the general result it produced. It was otherwise, on the whole, with the men of the south. Take one intellectual man as a specimen—Hazlitt. This celebrated critic always speaks of Old Mortality as Scott's noblest work; and, in verifying this criticism, uniformly appeals, not to the passages in which it caricatures, but to those in which it honours the Covenanters—not to Mause Headrigg, or Habakkuk Mucklewrath, but to MacBriar, preaching on the evening of Drumclog, or to Bessie MacLure, in her disinterested heroism, now sitting at the way-side to warn a friend, and now exposing her life to danger to save a foe, of the cause. The book, in fact, had produced on his mind, which on that subject was on the whole unprejudiced, an impression most favourable to the Covenanters—and he, without doubt, is the type of southland thousands.

It remains, fourthly, to balance the matter, and bring both sides of it before the reader. Scott, then, has caricatured Covenanting manners. His picture of the coarseness and vulgarity of their lowest rank, of the cant of their ministers, of the fierceness, the rancour, and the bigotry of the Cameronians—of the selfishness, revenge,

and cruelty, which blend with nobler elements in Burley, is undoubtedly overdrawn. Such a being as Mucklewrath never existed. Wild as some of the hill-men were, the wildest of them was sobriety personified, compared to that monstrous mixture of monomania, fanaticism, and fury. Old Mause is a more credible character, and is drawn with exquisite humour, but is also highly caricatured. MacBriar's conduct to Morton in the farm-house, where they are about to put him to death, totally belies all the finer traits the novelist had given him before, and jars on the memory as we witness his heroic and sublime appearance in the trial scene. It is gratifying to see Poundtext made ridiculous, as one of the indulged parsons of the period—those "dumb dogs that could not bark," keeping by their comfortable cribs, and munching their bones, while their brave brethren were chased like wolves upon the mountains. But Kettledrummle is a clumsy caricature of the more rigid minister. All the wit connected with him, indeed, lies in his name. To Burley we have just alluded. His whole conduct in reference to Basil Olifant, to Edith Bellenden, and to Lord Evandale, is a libel alike on the Covenanters and on human nature. His killing of the old archbishop on Magus Muir rises to an act of virtue, when compared to the mean, cold-blooded, and long-winded atrocities which are gratuitously transferred to his character. But Sir Walter has, certainly, sinned more deeply when he seeks to whitewash the persecutors, than when he blackens their victims. A good character aspersed soon rights itself; the dirt dries and disappears by a sure and swift process,—a bad character defended and deified is often allowed, without opposition, to slip into the Pantheon. Men, and it is in part a compliment to them, are more interested, somehow, in defending the unjustly assailed, than in pulling down the graven images of the guilty. Scott was haunted with the idea of a cavalier. It seemed to him the last representative of a knight of chivalry. He liked no music so well as the prancing of chargers, the striking of spurs, and the fierce

war-shouts of the riders. Hence, in his picture of the persecutors, their every dragoon is half a hero, Sergeant Bothwell a whole one ; and Lord Evandale is something higher—a sort of link between the soldier and the seraph. It is pleasing to see a great artist finding the "soul of goodness" which is in things evil, but not to see him infusing a double portion of it into characters who possess only a minimum of the article. Claverhouse is certainly one of the most brilliant of his characters, but is marred by gross inconsistency of conception, and is much more melodramatic than natural. He is not represented as a mere brutal butcher, nor yet as a perfect model of chivalry, but as an awkward compound of the fierce, careless warrior and the refined and gallant knight. The voice is Jacob's—the hands are Esau's. The author probably, at first, meant him for a model of all that is courtly and noble, but is compelled, partly by historical fact, and partly by the overruling power of his demon, to supply some very rough and damaging points. The universal opinion will probably be, that Scott has quite failed in conciliating regard for Claverhouse, and few readers will lay down Old Mortality without a deeper detestation for the dancing bear, the educated tiger, the handsome and accomplished murderer, which is all in reality that the author makes him out to be. Better have shown the rough bellowing, cursing, bloody captain, "the *towsy tyke*, black, grim, and large," that he actually was,—and there an end.

Yet, after all, there is another side to this question. If in some parts of his book no one has caricatured the Covenanters more severely, none has brought out some of their picturesque aspects with such felicity and force. Who but Scott could have described that scene in the inn where Burley overthrows Bothwell ; or that profounder scene in the barn, where on the old sleeping homicide's brow the sweat-drops of a great agony are standing, like "bubbles on the late disturbed stream," as the tragedy of Magus Muir is being re-enacted in his soul ; or the skirmish of Drumclog, or the tent-preaching which followed it, or the

rout of Bothwell, or the torture scene, or the shaggy mountain solitude, where Burley found his last desperate retreat, and fought with "more devils than vast hell could hold?" It sometimes happens that a caricature is more forceful, more life-like, more characteristic, than a picture, especially if the countenance be strongly marked. And so probably Scott has to many given an impression of the rough energy, the honesty, the daring, and the zeal of the Covenanters, which a tamer and more friendly portraiture could never have produced. The concessions of an enemy are, confessedly, more valuable than the *ex parte* statements of a friend. And still more when an enemy is transcendently powerful may his reluctant testimony, and the rude grandeur of his touch, be more effectual than all the pleadings and reclamations of weaker advocates on the other side.

On the whole, perhaps, the proper course is to pronounce a modified sentence in this matter. Few can think Old Mortality a strictly accurate or fair account of its age; and few would, on the other hand, be disposed to erase it as a blot from the list of Scott's works. It is a great partisan-production, like the histories of Clarendon and Hume. Like them it must always be read; but like them, too, it should be read with great caution, and with the addition of not a few grains of salt. Nor do we think that, had it appeared now, it would have produced one tithe of the pother, the excitement, the ire, the literary perspiration, and the keen controversy which it awakened thirty-five years ago, "when George the Third was king."

In his other works, numerous allusions to covenanting and puritanic times occur, all breathing a milder degree of the same spirit of mingled prejudice and admiration. David Deans is a genuine Covenanter, and is touched with a tender hand. In Jeannie Deans, he paints, *con amore*, a character which only Scotland and the remaining influence of the Covenanting day could have produced—so guileless, yet so prudent; so modest and so courageous;

so pious, yet so humble and disinterested; she is just Isabel Weir handed down to the next century. In the Bride of Lammermoor, he introduces a Covenanting minister who had been "out in the persecution," Mr. Bide-the-Bent, who makes on the whole an amiable figure. And equal to anything in all his writings is that weird story in Red Gauntlet—Wandering Willie's Tale, where he shows us the principal persecutors in hell, in a manner which would have delighted the inmost soul of the author of the Scottish Worthies himself, and which is, perhaps, the most powerful flight of imagination the wizard's genius ever took.

Many who will read these pages will probably remember that the sensation produced by the first appearance of Old Mortality was intense, and in Scotland very unfavourable. The reviews and pamphlets it provoked were numerous; but they have all perished, except one by Dr. MacRie, which still circulates in the shape of a small volume. It was felt at the time to be a most powerful attack. Of all men in Scotland, MacRie was perhaps best fitted, from sympathy and knowledge of the subject, for meeting Scott on the battle-field of the Covenant. He had also obtained a solid, colossal, repute from his Life of Knox, and was really a man of powerful intellect and extensive attainments. These were the sources of his strength; his weakness lay in a prepossession on the one side quite as strong as was Scott's on the other. He would scarcely admit that the Covenanters committed an error, or, if he did yield an inch of ground, it was after a struggle. He answered a partisan attack by a partisan defence. He weakened the effect, too, by commencing with an under-estimate of the genius and works of his opponent—in this case a signal error. For instance, he speaks with contempt of the Antiquary, rather coldly of Guy Mannering, and admits little literary merit in the book he was criticising. With all these drawbacks, his reply was a vigorous production, discovered a manly independence of sentiment, and rose, here and there, into

robust eloquence, and an invective reminding you of the anathemas of Cargill and Cameron. He carried, too, with triumphant success, the warfare into the enemy's camp, and, by way of counterpoise to Scott's caricatures of presbyterian preaching, quoted, from episcopalian divines of the same period, specimens of bathos profounder still, of a more adventurous nonsense, of silliness and stupidity more unique, and of prejudice, bigotry, and blindness, far more total and hopeless.

This review, pamphlet, or book—for it has assumed, in the course of its existence, the character of all three—told with tremendous effect. So much was this the case, that Scott was urged by his friends, who were in the secret of the authorship, to reply. He did so, accordingly, by the somewhat singular method of a review of his own book in the Quarterly, which did not materially alter the state of the question. Old Mortality was, and yet was not, answered. Where it grossly offended against truth and fact, its errors were now exposed ; but its powerful pictures of an enthusiasm which sometimes erred, and of a zeal and energy which often mistook or missed their mark, remained intact, and are as immortal as the memory of the Covenant itself. The collision of two such minds on such a subject did, however, much good. It attracted attention to a topic and a time which had been allowed, in a great measure, to drop from the minds of men ; it poured a flood of light upon a field over which thick mists were beginning to gather, and which yet had been one of the noblest in the history of Scotland or of the church.

Scott had in this book, like one of his own knights, blown a trumpet of defiance, and challenged all comers. And now, besides MacRie, many sprang forth, upon his own terms and at his own weapons, to accept the challenge. In other words, fiction and poetry were now extensively used as a medium of reply to his attack on the Covenanters, while many, besides, chose the subject as fashionable, and as furnishing a good opportunity of displaying their own powers to advantage. Many will remember yet with

pleasure reading Ringan Gilhaize, from the pen of the indefatigable John Galt, which was generally understood to be designed as a rejoinder to Scott. With much of the rambling inartistic character of all Galt's works, it has passages of beauty and interest, and does full justice to the amiable qualities of its heroes. But it was only a "secondary Scottish novel," and seemed but a feeble reply to the accusing voice which had come from the cloudy tabernacle in which the magician was then dwelling. William Douglas, or the Scottish Exiles, is the name of another novel on the same subject, rather popular in its day, but which seems now almost entirely forgotten. It was written by Dr. Duncan, of Rathwell—a respectable and popular writer, but a staunch tory—who actually in this work, while writing in favour of the Covenanters, advocated the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance! It is amusing to read this book about the same time with the writings of some of the patriarchs of the Covenant; and to imagine the indignation with which they would have regarded this degenerate scion of the church of Scotland, and scorned his finical and childish theories.

Rather earlier than this appeared a little poem, by one Hislop, in Ayrshire, called The Cameronian's Dream, which went immediately to the heart of the country. It was first published in a number of the Scots' Magazine, and attracted the notice and warm approval of Lord Jeffrey. With his characteristic kindness, he sought out the author, who was a shepherd, and got him promoted to be a private tutor—in an English noble family. Thence he went abroad, and died, but without having written anything else of much value. It is a dream of the battle of Airsmoss, and is distinguished by fine enthusiasm and a rich musical flow of versification. Thirty years ago it was unboundedly popular, was recited in every schoolroom and set to music and sung. It still appears in many collections of verse, and, from its own merits and the interest of its theme, is secure, certainly, of a long reputation, if not of universal and imperishable fame.

James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, must also be named among the defenders of the children of the Covenant; for although his Brownie of Bodsbeck was begun before Old Mortality, it was not published till after it. He conducted the defence in this, and in some of his after tales, in his own rough fashion, resembling rather a Dandie Dinmont at the close of a market-day, laying about him with a thorn cudgel, than a well armed champion. With the religious spirit of that peculiar people he had little real sympathy, but he had been brought up in mountain scenery, and near some of their old haunts; he had been taught reverence for them at his mother's knee; he had imbibed new respect for them from the general feeling of the southland peasantry; he had much of their superstition, if little of their piety, and became thus well qualified to write on their moorland retreats, their hairbreadth escapes, their miraculous adventures, and, above all, about the strange stories they told concerning the deaths or other terrible dooms of their enemies. No one—not even Scott—has surpassed Hogg in his occasional management of the superstitions of Scotland—witness the fearful tale entitled Geordie Dobson's Expedition to Hell—and he found ample scope for the exercise of this weird gift in his notices of the Covenanters.

The man best qualified for meeting Sir Walter upon his own ground, and weaving a just estimate of our fathers into a noble and life-like fiction, was, unquestionably, Professor Wilson. Had this extraordinary man but condensed his powers, subdued somewhat the motion of his mighty genius, urged it into one great channel, and added the "Consecration" to the "Poet's Dream," there was no eminence, in any direction, which he might not have reached. In poetry, in philosophy, in oratory, in preaching, in the drama, in fiction, in the army, in parliament, as a traveller—in every department except that of the severer sciences—all who know him know that he could have taken the foremost place. Not more certainly has

he sometimes run up a lofty hill without drawing breath (like Malcolm, in the Lady of the Lake,

> "Right up Benlomond would he press,
> And not a sob his toil confess,")

than could he have crowned any summit in the wide chain of human capabilities. So gifted was he, in the prodigality of heaven, with faculties of wondrous breadth and variety, and of no less wondrous depth and intensity, with an intellect not inferior to his imagination, with wit and humour and fancy almost Shaksperian, and with a solemn organ-like Orphean tone of mind, which needed only systematic spiritual culture to round off all his powers with an epical completeness, and to elevate them to a religious dignity. He was brought up, too, within sight of the dark moors where the Covenanters suffered; his mother mixed the religious prejudices and feelings of Scotland with his life's blood, and in youth he often visited the glens and hills which tradition had consecrated to their name. And who that has ever heard him in his class-room, speaking to his students on some transporting theme, such as beauty, or the immortality of the soul, or the sufferings of the Indian prisoners, in that divine sing-song, those wild and wailing cadences, "like the lingering, long-drawn out, slow-expiring notes of a cathedral organ," could not fancy him a hill-preacher, addressing the assembled multitude on the eve of battle, or soothing their chafed souls when, after defeat, they had assembled themselves in their dens and caves, like those Gadites of old with David in the hold of the wilderness, "who could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were as the faces of lions, and they were swift as the roes upon the mountains?"

What might not such a man have done, not merely for the memory of the Covenanters, but for the advancement of moral and religious truth in Scotland and in the world? It were invidious, and is needless, to examine the causes why the life of that magnificent being has been in some

points a failure. Suffice it that his tone in reference to our heroes has always been enthusiastic, and that in his Lights and Shadows there occur several tales beautifully representing his sympathy with their cause, their sincerity, and their sufferings. Indeed, throughout all his writings and prelections, we find a deeper appreciation than in Scott, or in any other writer not avowedly theological, of the devotion of Scotland, and particularly of that which long burned, and to some extent burns still, like the fire upon their low-lying hearths, in the souls of the Scottish peasantry. Who would not pray that a portion of that flame has been transferred to this great spirit himself, and that it will cheer him as he now feels the last twilight gathering around his steps, and sees, at no great distance before him, the first sombre shadows of the valley of death.

For many years past, the tone of Scottish literature, in reference to the times of the Covenant, has been in general sound and healthy. One exception must afterwards be named.

Robert Pollok, the celebrated author of The Course of Time, began his literary career with two or three little tales about the persecuted. He came from the borders of the country into which they had been driven, and was, like Wilson, familiar from boyhood with the scenes of their sufferings. From that spot which he commemorates, where from behind his father's house he saw the distant peaks of the highland mountains—that great battlement stretching from the Atlantic to the German Ocean, and set, as with huge watch-towers, with the peaks of Benlomond, Benvenue, Benvoirlich, Schiehallion, and a hundred more of Nature's "sturdiest bairns," and which became his "standard still of rural imagery," he had only to look round, and to see to the south the moors of Ayrshire and Clydesdale: a scene less romantic, but teeming with far profounder associations. In the intervals of his elaborate preparation of The Course of Time, he wrote three little stories, entitled Helen of the Glen,

The Persecuted Family, and Ralph Gemmell, all treating of subjects connected with the persecution. They were not first-rate in artistic execution, but were pleasingly written, and contained much beautiful description of scenery. Helen of the Glen he wrote when a student, and carried, it is said, to a Glasgow bookseller, and offered it him at ten guineas. The bookseller demurred—the author being but a youth, having no name, and the book being a little one. Pollok, however, with his usual determination, persevered, and at last obtained his price, which was no doubt of much consequence to him at that difficult period of his life. These little books did not reach popularity till after The Course of Time became famous, which was not, it will be remembered, till its author's death. They were reprinted and rather widely circulated. They can never, however, be expected, even in the deep wake of The Course of Time, to sail on to immortality.

That heroic man of Annandale, Edward Irving—a man of whom, with all his faults and errors, the world was not worthy—delighted to honour the memory of the Covenanters on every occasion, and to all audiences. Sometimes he appeared amid their ancient haunts, and as he preached to thousands on the mountain-side, it seemed as if one of the old ministers had risen from the dead. Now amid the hills of Galloway, and now beside the glories of the Frith of Forth, there "rolled the rich thunder of his awful voice," and men saw a wild inspiration—a something not of the earth—speaking in his deep cavernous tones, in the devious fire of his vision, in that gesture and those attitudes which seemed immediately given him from without, and in his words of spirit and life, and poetry. It was an impersonation of the old Covenanting minister—so perfect, so unconscious, and so sincere, that not a few felt their minds carried back to the seventeenth century, and, for a moment or two, imagined that Charles was still on the throne, and the church still in the wilderness. When he entered the

metropolis, like a storm, he carried tidings of these old days upon his wings. Often he painted the field-preachings, and praised the worthies of other times; and when he changed his mood, and opened his vials of wrath upon principalities and powers, upon the wicked poets and the godless philosophers and statesmen of the day, men were reminded of the anathemas of the Galloway wildernesses, the excommunications of kings and generals which took place there—if they did not rather think of the burden-bowed prophets of Israel—or if they did not, rather still, see in thought one of the girt, sandalled, and white-robed angels coming forth from the "smoke of the glory of God," and emptying out upon the earth the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of the Almighty. In his writings he does frequent justice to their memory, and there is extant, in one of the annuals, a tale from his pen illustrating their character with beautiful simplicity. In his errors, too, and in his fall, he bore them a striking resemblance. Like them, his notions of the spirituality of the church were imperfect. Like them, he became consumed in a fire of his own kindling; or rather, he came too near the bush-burning—his eyes were dazzled—he raised a power he could neither manage nor lay, his religion became tainted with superstition, his zeal with fanaticism, his genius with insanity—and we may apply to both the words originally applied to one mightier than they all:—

> "He passed the flaming bounds of space and time.
> The living throne—the sapphire blaze,
> Where angels tremble as they gaze,
> He saw;—but, blasted with excess of light,
> Closed his eyes in endless night!"

He was *ultimus Romanorum*—the last giant product of the Covenanting energy—and his failure partly lay in trying, unsuccessfully, to unite its spirit with our present progress: a task which will yet be accomplished, but for which no single man seems competent.

Several men of genius have yet to be named, as having sung, in verse or poetic prose, of the heroes of this volume.

Wordsworth alludes to them unfrequently, but with warmth, as men with whose fame

"All Scotland rings from side to side."

Thomas Aird has a fine vision introducing them, entitled The Mount of Communion, and the whole genius of his poetry and his prose is evidently that of one who has often pored over their history, read their books, and seen their blue banner fluttering over his head in the hall of dreams. Thomas Carlyle has lost whatever sympathy he once had with their creed, but admires the earnestness of their character, and speaks of this as the *differentia* between the peasantry of Scotland then, and that of England at *any* age. "Delta" has a poem entitled The Covenanter's Night Hymn, breathing much of that peculiarly rich and plaintive sweetness, which was the characteristic of his elegant and holy poetry.

Besides these, a number of books of a historic or anecdotical kind have, more or less recently, teemed from the press. Such are the younger MacRie's Historical Sketches, The Bass Rock, The Ladies of the Covenant, Biographia Presbyteriana, Traditions of the Covenanters, (by Rev. R. Simpson, Sanquhar,) MacGavin's Scottish Worthies, Dr. Hetherington's History of the Church of Scotland, and many others with which the public are less acquainted. All these which have been named possess considerable merit; and some of them, such as the works of MacRie and Simpson, are exceedingly instructive and entertaining.

The only late production on the other side which has attracted much notice or wielded any power, has been Aytoun's Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers. This is doubtless a clever volume, although imitative in structure, style and spirit. It is a book bred between Scott's poems and Macaulay's Lays of Ancient Rome. It has not, however, the Homeric fire, or the nervous condensation, or the glorious gallop of either. Its author, in his war-poems, writes in general like one of the awkward squad; to this his Montrose is an exception, being really a noble ballad

so far as execution is concerned. So, too, is his Burial March of Dundee, the rush of whose verse is right martial. All this were very well; but Mr. Aytoun has added some notes defending the persecutors, and pointing the insinuations of the text more distinctly against our suffering fathers. In his note to the Ballad of Montrose, he has the baseness to allude to the death of Lord Warristoun with coarse and savage exultation; although, according to Sir George Mackenzie himself, whom he quotes, "it moved all the spectators with a deep melancholy; and the chancellor reflecting upon the man's great parts, former esteem, and the great share he had in all the late revolutions, could not deny some tears to the frailty of silly mankind." Yet in this frailty, manifested by asking his judges for mercy in piteous tones, Professor Aytoun chooses to luxuriate.

That the treatment of Montrose at his execution was savage we admit, but not more so than was customary in these times, and was positive mildness compared to the barbarities afterwards inflicted on David Hackstoun in Scotland, and Algernon Sidney in England. Argyle was treated in precisely the same way as his rival. Aytoun admits that Montrose's death was the natural, nay, the inevitable, consequence of his capture; but so, doubtless, in that age was the "treatment" which he underwent—treatment provoked by treachery, bloodshed, and implacable animosity to the Covenanting cause. Yet let us not, in our detestation of the *animus* of the note, forget the merit of the poetry. The following stanza is very noble:—

> "But when he came, though pale and wan,
> He looked so great and high;
> So noble was his manly front,
> So calm his steadfast eye;
> The rabble rout forgot to shout,
> And each man held his breath;
> For well they knew the hero's soul
> Was face to face with death.

> And then a mournful shudder
> Through all the people crept;
> And some that came to scoff at him
> Now turned aside and wept."

In his prefix to the Burial March of Dundee, Aytoun, in order to gain a hearing for a ballad of considerable length, takes rather extraordinary liberties with facts, and gives an ingenious travesty of the history of the Covenanting period. According to him the persecuted began the persecution; or rather it was a mere "retaliation" for murders committed by the country people on the soldiery, officers, and gentlemen of loyal principles. This is a mere falsehood. That the country people, stung to despair, did occasionally shed blood, is admitted; but it is denied that they ever did so without provocation. He says, the "country was then under military law;" but why? Because the infatuated government had sought to thrust the prelates on the people, and the people had resisted. He says, "the necessity of such orders will become apparent, when we reflect that, besides the open actions of Airsmoss and Drumclog, the city of Glasgow was attacked, and the royal forces were compelled for a time to fall back upon Stirling." Now both these open actions were nothing more than little skirmishes, provoked by the assaults of the military upon men who were dwelling alone and harmless, although not unarmed, in the wilderness—like the simoom of the poet,

> "Which seeketh not, so that it be not sought;
> But being met is deadly."

Besides, the attack on Glasgow was not, as Aytoun insinuates, a separate enterprise, but grew naturally out of that rising which Claverhouse created by his attack on the field-meeting at Loudon-hill. The laureate of Clavers, "the cursed of Scotland," proceeds to say, "Innocent blood may no doubt have been shed, and in some cases even

wantonly; for when rebellion has grown into civil war, and the ordinary course of the law is put in abeyance, it is always impossible to restrain military license." Was John Brown, of Priesthill, a warrior, or even a rebel? Except for one short month was there any thing approaching civil war in Scotland? That Claverhouse himself "shot every rebel with his own hand," was never believed by any body; but it is notorious that he not only stimulated his soldiers to cruelty, but often took the work into his own hands, and is said to have "shot one hundred in cold blood" in the course of ten years—pretty well for a soldier so "devoted, so stainless in honour, pure in faith, wise in council, resolute in action, free from selfishness, and, above all, with such calm, melancholy, and beautiful features!" It is, according to Hazlitt, a bad proof of a man's character to refer to his face, and shews an infirmity of conviction on the part of the appraiser. That Claverhouse's features were "melancholy" is not to be wondered at; the same is probably true of the features of all murderers. That they were calm, is less likely; and even if beautiful, we need not be astonished that his victims were unable to perceive it any more than the hunted hare the symmetry of the greyhound, or to accept it as a compensation for the confiscation of their goods, the torture of their bodies, the oppression of their consciences, or the anguish of their bleeding hearts.

Professor Aytoun proceeds to give an account of his hero's story—his education, his serving in France and Holland, his saving the life of the Prince of Orange, and so forth. But, with all the characteristic caution of an Auld Reekie lawyer, when he comes to speak of his military command in Scotland, he says, "It would be beyond the scope of this paper to enter minutely into the details of his service during the stormy period when Scotland was certainly misgoverned." Surely this is Hamlet with the character of Hamlet omitted! What does the world care for Claverhouse, except as the president of the persecution? Would his name ever have been

heard of but as a wholesale and retail murderer? What care we for his "leaps at Rhodes," his gallant deeds on the continent, or even his fortunate fall at Killiecrankie? What was he, what did he, how seemed he in Scotland from 1679 to 1689? Did he or did he not shoot the sainted Brown? Did he or did he not, along with his party, ravish a woman in Galloway before her husband's eyes? Did he or did he not tie up a boy with a cord by his two thumbs to the roof of the house? Did he or did he not commit a thousand other acts of cruelty which might be called infernal, save for the detestable meanness and littleness which mingled with them, and proved him an ape rather than a fiend? And how *did* he gain that epithet which clings to his corse, "the bloody Clavers?" How trifling to set off against all this his services in Holland, his loyalty to King James—and, save the mark! his countenance!

According to this writer it was a mercy for William of Orange that King James did not accept the offer of Claverhouse to be allowed to march against him, else "William would have found more than a match in his old officer." Clavers, whom John Burley beat so effectually at Drumclog, was sure to have annihilated William—one of the first captains in Europe—a soldier in whom even defeat uniformly revealed new greatness. But this is nothing to the information given us in the close of the sentence, that "the great bulk of the population of England were *clearly* and enthusiastically in King James's favour." Cowed, certainly, many of them in the west of England were, by the memory of Monmouth's hapless fate, and not willing to rise in support of William; but throughout the mass of the people there was neither "clearness of purpose nor enthusiasm" of spirit. Many were struck stupid, many more were halting between two opinions, many were enthusiastic on the side of the Prince of Orange; and if the other party had felt themselves so powerful as he pretends, a sudden display of their feelings might have ended the infatuation, and confirmed the faltering resolu-

tion of the monarch. "It seems that one of the most gifted of our modern poets," the Honourable George Sydney Smythe, has beautifully illustrated the noble anxiety of Claverhouse to fight against his old commander in behalf of a superstitious and incurable imbecile. Every one knows the proverbial multitude of the clan Smith, (although this name is elegantly distinguished by a varied orthography, and an "honourable," from the common herd), but few, probably, ever heard of this gentleman or of his poetry before, or never expect to hear of him again. Shade of the author of "Johnnie Armstrong," or thou disembodied spirit of Blind Harry, listen to this from "one of the most gifted of our modern poets," and be dumb in eternal envy!

> "O never yet was captain so dauntless as Dundee,
> He has sworn to chase the Hollander back to the Zuyder Zee."

The professor then proceeds to depict Dundee's march northward; remarking, *inter alia*, that he stayed a short time at the "house of Dudhope" near Dundee—a house which one can hardly pass without a suppressed execration on the bloody villain who once lived there, whose crimes all the waters of the Tay flowing past, or of the ocean into which it empties itself, could not wash away; and whose memory is, in this region of his birth, as in all other parts of Scotland, most devoutly detested. It was easy for the Highlanders to admire "Dark John of the Battles." He never wasted their country with fire and sword—never ravished their women, tortured their children, or killed their patriarchs in cold blood. He was, however, at best a ruffian *on their side*, and probably the epithet "dark" expressed as much terror as admiration.

A dialogue between Lochiel and Claverhouse is next given, which, by internal evidence, seems quite as apocryphal as that between him and Lady Margaret at Tillietudlem. The incidents of the battle follow, which are well depicted, but of course with a strong leaning to the cause and character of Clavers. The consternation of his enemies at the news of his victory, ere they were

counterbalanced by the tidings of his death, is recorded in a grossly one-sided and exaggerated form. And then this prefix of little truth and much falsehood closes with a Latin epitaph by Dr. Pitcairn, which is just a lie eight lines long. This sapient personage chooses to call Claverhouse *ultime Scotorum*, describes him as the only man equal to the task of securing the liberty of his country, and says that Scotland from the date of his death received "new citizens and new gods." Most true, although not in the sense of the foolish pedant. With Claverhouse died a race of human savages; and the gods of clanship, —murder, exaction, and legalized oppression—might well wail over his grave.

He lies in the church of Blair Athole, but we do not think that Aytoun's Burial March has consecrated his tomb, or drawn many pilgrims to weep over it. The memory of the wicked shall rot, and over the grave of Clavers, as over those of all hard-hearted men, the crown of crime seems to sit shadowy on the turf, and the feet of devils may be fancied to dance above the sod that covers him. Shall we substitute for the empty grandiloquence of Pitcairn's epitaph, the following true and simple words, which a thousand ghosts might rise from the moors to attest? "Here lies one who believed not in God but in his sword—not in man, but in his banner—who, as it was said of Cæsar, that he went with sobriety to the ruin of his country, shed the blood of his fellow-men as coolly as if he had been shedding water—who never trembled nor blushed when alive, but who would have blushed had he foreseen what fooleries of admiration were to be perpetrated by his partizans—that Pitcairn was to compose his epitaph, and Aytoun to chant his funeral ode."

There is much besides in the professor's volume on which we might have commented. The spirit of the whole is not that of a generous and noble partizan, like Walter Scott; it is that of a vulgar voluuteer in the bad cause. Scott's prejudices were the natural result of his education and reading; Aytoun's are but Scott's cast-off clothes. Of Scott's sincerity there can be no doubt—of Aytoun's there

may be much; Scott's occasionally gibing and insulting tone, when he speaks of the Covenanters, you excuse on account of his transcendent merits, just as you allow Michael Angelo to use liberties with his angels or devils, which no inferior genius durst attempt at his peril. Aytoun's is the small spite of a school-boy who confounds impudence with cleverness, and thinks that, because connected with Christopher North, he may indulge in similar freaks of fancy, and present the distaff without the Hercules—the contortions without the inspiration—the buffooneries or profanities of Falstaff without his wit, his *bonhommie*, or his rich originality.

That Mr. Aytoun has genius, or at least something very like it, we are not disposed to deny. But it will take more than the "forty-pounder power" of puffing, wielded in his favour by the Times or the Quarterly, to prove his genius equal to the task of pulling down the children of the Covenant, or canonizing Clavers. Let any one who wishes to see how he fails in understanding or expressing anything morally great, turn to a poem in the volume entitled the "Blind Old Milton"—a poor, weak, maudlin imitation of the "Lament of Tasso."

Hear the following lines for instance:—

> "And I have walked with Hampden and with Vane—
> Names once so gracious to an English ear;
> In days that never may return again
> My voice, *though not the loudest*, hath been heard,
> Whenever Freedom raised her cry of pain,
> *And the faint effort of the humble bard*
> Hath roused up thousands from their lethargy,
> To speak in words of thunder."

Milton a *humble* bard! *He* talk, as if he were a miserable, cringing author in a bookseller's front-shop, of his "faint effort!" Professor Aytoun should shun henceforth two subjects—Milton and the Scottish Covenanters. His treatment of the former only lessened men's notions of his genius; but that of the latter has roused the rough deep, holy heart of his native country against him.

CHAPTER IX.

DEDUCTIONS FROM THE HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF THE COVENANTERS.

We have already, in the course of our little journey, interposed, here and there, remarks, like moral mile-stones, shewing the direction to which we have been travelling, and the goal at which we wished our readers as well as ourselves to arrive. But it may be well before closing, to arrange the reflections which have suggested themselves while pursuing the narrative and the estimate, somewhat more systematically, and to converge them, though at the hazard of a little repetition, into a more distinct focus.

These, then, are First, the folly of persecution for conscience' sake. Second, the indomitable power of a sincere religious belief. Third, the influence of adversity and persecution in developing character, strengthening enthusiasm, and discovering latent springs of strength and of virtue. Fourth, the irresistible attraction leading a dominant church downwards to tyranny and bloodshed, and reacting afterwards in revolt and revolution. Fifth, the deep folly and guilt of seeking to impose either religion or religious creeds upon a recusant nation. Sixth, the evils of Erastianism. Seventh, the no less glaring and disastrous evils of priestly domination. Eighth, the failure produced by trying to secure a good object through evil or doubtful means. Ninth, the impossibility of properly adjusting by any conceivable alliance the conflicting claims

of church and state. Tenth, the consequent necessity of complete severance of the two. Eleventh, the power of the voluntary principle; and Twelfth, the bearing of the whole upon the present condition of society.

We infer, first, the folly of persecution for conscience' sake. It is marvellous to think how much time and suffering and reasoning it has taken to expose this primal mistake. One sentence you might have imagined might have blasted it in its cradle, and that one sentence might have been the golden rule—"Do to others as you would have others to do unto you." Who regards not as sacred that conscience which forms the separating barrier between him and the lower animals, and the connecting link between him and the Unseen Lawgiver, and considers it not, so far as himself is concerned, invaluable and indefeasible as his existence? And who ought not to draw the conclusion from this primary intuition of his soul, that it is the same with all other men; that they, too, possess each one his inviolable moral sense, and that for him to interfere with its rights in others, is to sanction every outrage which may be perpetrated by others on its rights in him. To this rule of equity, squared and settled by the hand of God himself, Common-sense has added its testimony, and old Experience, in the slow utterance of centuries, has stammered out "Amen." Bloody page after page of persecution has gone to prove it. Age after age has the cry of conscience, aggrieved, down-trodden, half-choked in blood, gone up to heaven; and from heaven in reply the truth has been gradually, like a Jacob's ladder, descending, that man is answerable not to man but to God alone for his belief. And as second to none of the demonstrations this great principle has received do we count the war of the Covenant. The Covenanters did not, indeed, fight the battle of conscience upon that rule of Christ's, as on a "field of cloth of gold;" they fought it upon the ground of an iron necessity: it was rather liberty for their own consciences, than liberty for conscience that they strove after. But their instruction was bettered—their aim was overshot

—they got, or we at least got, something better than they asked; and in their success the triumph of the particular has become that of the general conscience of our country. There has been no great persecution in Britain since. Harassing of conscience, skirmishes, efforts at re-establishing the old arbitrary system, have been common; but the memory of twenty-eight years' blood had too thoroughly sickened the land to permit a renewal of the same, or of any similar complex and continuous tragedy. Had these stubborn Covenanters yielded the consequences had been disastrous. Scotland would have been crushed under the heel of arbitrary power, or would have added a powerful prop to the throne of the Stewarts—popery might have become supreme; or even if King James had been expelled from his throne, his cause would have found refuge not in Ireland but in Scotland. It, under the circumstances supposed, might have become a far more formidable centre of resistance, and the war might have been determined in another way than it was by the battle of the Boyne. By this time we might have been all contented slaves like the catholics of Spain, or discontented and half-risen slaves like those of Italy. But it was otherwise determined; and through the kindness of Providence, and through the obstinacy, as it was called, of the Covenanters, the Beast of persecution, although not dead, has had his nails pared, his limbs paralyzed, and must now, like old Giant Pope, in this country at least, grin out his malice from the mouth of his cave; or, if he venture forth, must submit rather to be ridiculed for the idiot smiles of his dotage and the contortions of his despair, than feared for the energies of renewed youth, and recovered insolence and power.

We infer, secondly, the indomitable power of a sincere religious belief. We have alluded to this already, but cannot forbear speaking of it again. This becomes the more necessary, when we remember the peculiar circumstances of the present time. This age is not, it must be admitted, eminently distinguished for the depth or definitude of its belief. Here there are, indeed, two extremes

to be avoided in our estimate. We err, if we think this an age either of gross determined unbelief or of ardent settled faith. It is distinguished, on the part of a large class, by absolute indifference on the subject of religion; on the part of another, by deep uncertainty; and only on the part of fractions of the community, either by a powerful and proselytizing infidelity, or by a bigotted and one-sided belief. And just as a recent writer has maintained that the poetry of our age is leaving its poems, and is flowing out into general literature, and finding a thousand new channels, instead of the banks of verse which once straitly confined it: so, in some degree, is it with belief. If not so intense, it is now much broader. If not so enthusiastic, it is more liberal and more genial. What is wanted is, the infusion of more earnestness into its elasticity—the union of greater depth with its breadth. And one method of securing this end, or at least of urging it as an attainable end upon public attention, is by frequently recurring to the contemplation of the earnest periods of the past. It is vain, indeed, to seek to restore these in their entireness. It is vain to attempt to confine the wheels of this age's tendencies—wheels instinct with spirit, burning with fervid fury and full of eyes, to any point fixed in any period of the past. Our ancestors were good men—giants after their kind—but they were one-eyed giants at the best, and there was much of the religion of Jesus of which they knew no more than they did of the laws by which the heavenly bodies are sustained on their silent pivots and propelled on their everlasting way. We must say to them, in the spirit of a noble independence, "We are thankful to you—you had your part to play, and you played it nobly—you had your work to do, and you did it well—you told us much truth, and you told us it rudely but powerfully: but now, we, too, have dawned out of the eternal east—we, too, have our truth to tell—we, too, live and move not as the echoes of your errors, nor as the garnishers of your sepulchres, but as the free-minded men of quite another era."

But if the men of the present day may not own their plenary inspiration, and accept as oracular every letter in their creed, let them seek to

"Roll their raptures, and to catch their fire."

Let them imitate them in all in which they *can* now be imitated by men of sense, in the strength of their general belief of christianity, and in the effort they made to express that belief in earnest action and suffering. We advocate a pilgrimage to the martyrs' tombs, not because the whole truth slumbers with them, nor, on the other side, because they simply evinced an earnest spirit; but because it would be glorious to see that new protestantism, that generalization of scripture truth, adapted to this age —which is rapidly rising around us, energized and inspired by *their* zeal and burning sincerity.

Thomas Carlyle has sent us to the grave of Cromwell and of the puritanic age to learn a lesson of earnestness, and of nothing more. He evidently despises the belief of his heroes, not only in its circumstantials, but in its essentials; in all but the tenacity and truth of its hold upon their minds. He might instead (as he has elsewhere) have sent us on a pilgrimage to Mecca, or even to Pandemonium, where the fiends are all in error, indeed, but all in red-hot, terrible earnest. But, on the contrary, while the puritans and the Covenanters may be deemed mistaken in many minor matters, and in some points of importance, too, they were right in their main principles. Faith cannot change its roots with each revolving age, nor christianity be dependent upon its forms. Men sat at the feet of Moses till Christ came, and they are right in resolving to cling to Christ's word till a greater arrive—*that is for ever.* Carlyle and Emerson do away with Christ, and they present no substitute, nor hold out the hope of one, *in sæcula sæculorum.* Earnestness or enthusiasm without solid truth is but "foam cut off from the water"—brilliant, useless, short-lived, and on the whole *false.*

We see next the power of suffering and adversity in developing character, strengthening enthusiasm, and dis-

covering latent virtues. "Call no man happy till he be dead." Call no man little till he be dead, and no cause little till it has become fully developed and tried. Had the Covenanters submitted quietly to the exactions which followed the restoration, or accepted the sops which were given them from time to time by the government, the memory of their triumphs would ere this have well-nigh perished. In this case, their recollection had been that of a torrent rapidly waxing, gaining an easy and a short triumph, and then as speedily subsiding. But the Covenant is now a feeble sound, when compared to the words, "the Persecution for the Covenant, and what *it* did and developed." Not till the word was taken down from the triumphant banner, and written in blood upon the moorlands of Scotland, did it become a magic sound. The Covenanters had fought well, indeed, but not so well as the Cavaliers under Montrose, or the Independents under Cromwell. But when the dark hour of their party arrived, it discovered a wealth of courage and constancy, of energy and zeal, which had lain as unsuspected as till lately were the Californian or Australian mines. We may apply to them the words of Cowper—

> "Persecution dragged them into fame,
> And chased them up to heaven."

Their sun in prosperity was rather sultry than bright, but in its evening decadence and decline it assumed hues of deep and melancholy grandeur which fill the eyes with tears. Never can the age arrive when men shall not sympathise with that "people of the rocks, dwelling alone, and not reckoned among the nations," with their rugged virtues, their severe sufferings, and the late but decisive success which shone upon their struggle.

We infer, again, the irresistible attraction leading a dominant church downwards to cruelty and bloodshed, and reacting afterwards into revolt and revolution. The times of the Covenant supply us with two striking illustrations of this. In the first instance the Covenanters were successful, and, had their power continued at the

zenith much longer, it would have led, as it was leading, them to acts of despotism. But just as this tendency began to manifest itself, Cromwell seized the reins, and from his hand they passed into those of the episcopalian church, which was permitted to complete the cycle of necessary degradation the presbyterians had begun. Soon instead of a blessing it became a curse ; instead of a soft shower-cloud it became an incubus over the land. It has been so, and must be so always with dominant ecclesiastical incorporations. Representing necessarily only the opinions of one section of christians—compelled to assert dogmatically what after all is not dogmatically certain, and to exaggerate alike the points in which they differ from, and those in which they agree with, others—they are sure to create virulent opposition in the subordinate sects, and are driven, in the self-defence of their false position, to cruel civil or military measures, which in their turn provoke further resistance, and this again leads to renewed extravagances and exactions, and so the wretched chase goes on till it ends for a time in some gulf of anarchy, or some conclusive revolution. It is vain to say that the evil lies in the quantity of enactment, or in the angle at which the imposition is laid ; it lies in the very effort made to impose, and in the evil implied in the fact of enacting, what ought never, and can never, be really established. Almost every sect which has risen to power has risen accidentally and often by false means—has surpassed its competitors by a hair's-breadth, and, in order to keep up its diminutive distance, and to confirm its ill-gotten superiority, has resorted to fire or faggot or sword, or other methods meaner and not more christian. Still the worst, however, of the matter is that, even from the gulf of revolution or anarchy, after a period, there has hitherto been sure to rise again the same old fallacy of the necessity of a predominant church, and that presumed necessity has become pregnant, and some new form of an establishment has come forth, destined to run the old, although modified, career of presumption, pride, error, resistance, and ultimate destruction. And so must it continue to be, till nations

become aware of the truth that the grand secret in reference to the christian religion is to let all its different sects alone—to give them, as states, no encouragement or discouragement whatever, neither to persecute nor to pamper them—to mark only those which, by establishing *imperium in imperio*, render sedition a religious duty, and interfere with the internal government of kingdoms—and in recognising the grand principles of morality, to remember that these preceded both Moses and Christ, and that they are sufficient still to secure the obedience of all but atheists. Surely it is a poor and miserable thing to seek, by the artificial heat of state-patronage, to accelerate the motions of that mighty leaven thrown into the world by a divine hand, which is "leavening the whole lump," and which, if shortened in its movements at all, must be by the same power which at first mingled it with the meal.

Next we may draw the inference that it involves deep guilt and folly to seek to impose a religion, or even religious formularies, upon a recusant nation. Sir Walter Scott himself, in his review of his own Tales of My Landlord, admits that at first the conduct of the government to the presbyterians was insufferably severe and unjust, but contends that in 1669—the period of the indulgence—"a gleam of common sense and justice seems to have beamed upon the Scottish councils of Charles." That is, he or his councillors, finding that the whole of the hated thing would not go easily down the Covenanting throats, tried, by fire and sword, to compel them to swallow a fragment of it! And this "Indulgence," according to his own concession in the next sentence, "was clogged with harsh conditions, and frequently renewed or capriciously recalled." Besides, accepting it compromised the whole question at issue, whether government, and especially a government fast becoming papistical, had a right either to persecute or to protect, either to crush or to indulge, their religion. The sterner presbyterians saw farther than their "pawky" brethren of the Indulgence. They saw that popery and arbitrary

power were fast approaching—that the Indulgence was one of their advanced flags, and that Charles and his brother were alike tyrants and papists, and unworthy, therefore, of having their "authority acknowledged." With manly heart, at the loss of their comforts and at the peril of their lives, they proceeded to spurn the condescension, to reject the miserable crumb from their despot's table ; and let them have honour both for the sagacity and the self-denial which dictated their course.

How often have religious persecutions and religious wars turned upon what now seem trifles ! But we must always make allowance for the angle *at* which, and for the light *in* which, these minute points are seen. An infinitesimal has sometimes more than the consequence and the magnitude of an integer. Nay the fly sometimes, as in the fable, swallows up the sun. Besides, it is perhaps fitting, as all religious wars and persecutions are contemptible, that they should be about contemptible objects. So, however, it did not, and perhaps could not, appear to the half-cultured minds of our fathers. The question about an extempore or a read prayer was equivalent to "Under which king do you serve—King Charles or King Jesus ?" It became the small algebraic symbol of a mighty principle. Such a trifle, too, seemed to them the embryo of antichrist peeping out, and they sought to crush it accordingly. Those, at least, in our day, who have discovered such salutary and edifying horror at the recent innovations in the Anglican church, need not despise the Covenanters for their squeamishness. It is important, also, to distinguish between the imposing and the resisting of a small ceremonial observance. The folly and the crime begin with, and ultimately lie at the door of, those who seek to impose ; only imprudence and obstinacy can be laid to the charge of those who resist. Illegal power has no right to snatch even a pebble from our mantel-piece, or a cane from our lobby, although it may not always be wise to resent or resist such tiny aggressions. Sometimes, however, as in the case of Hampden with his ship-money, and the Americans with their tea-tax—it is wise, nay necessary ;

and at all events experience teaches us the gross folly and blindness of those governments which have staked, and often lost, their existence on petty exactions—which, in search of little additions to their power, have braved great dangers, and have in general been vanquished or annihilated in the struggle.

The evil of Erastianism is another lesson which this subject cannot fail to teach us. The root of this error lies, indeed, deeper than our fathers dreamed of, namely, in the inevitable influence which the state must exercise over every church which condescends to take its pay—an influence which in its exaggerated form is just Erastianism. It is only, therefore, on our principles that Erastianism can be *consistently* or *thoroughly* opposed. Erastianism we look upon as the full result—the *reductio ad absurdum*, of the endowment or establishment idea: both are embarked in the same boat, and whatever tends to show the evil of the one tends to show that of the other, and *vice versâ*. In reference to this Covenanting struggle, as well as to all similar passages in history, it is on the one hand ridiculous to think of a state resigning all power over the internal affairs of a church which was in form, though not in substance, its creature. But it is more pitiable, on the other hand, to think of the religious creed of a nation tampered with, cut and carved upon, touched and retouched like a half-finished picture; adjusted and re-adjusted, like a new garment to the shape of the wearer, by any king, or council, or parliament on earth. And, perhaps, most absurd of all is it to conceive of the counter-claims of powers so diverse, being ever so well reconciled as to form a satisfactory and permanent whole. Would that our modern enemies of Erastianism were but to open their eyes and see this grape of Sodom springing from a root planted beside the Dead Sea of secularized christianity! That the Covenanters did not see this was not wonderful; but that many now should, after the sad experience of two additional centuries, wink hard at the palpable connection of the two, and should prate of Erastianism as one of the original curses of the church, while

in fact it is, to change the figure, a mere wart or pimple on the bloated face of ecclesiastical incorporations, seems to us inexplicable. Thanks to the Covenanters for the noble stand which they made against Erastianism! but less thanks to those who would now "cut off the branches, and even hew down the tree," but would leave the "stump of the roots thereof in the earth, with a band of iron and brass."

Perhaps the same period may teach us a brief but pregnant lesson as to the evils of priestly domination. The Erastian state was deeply to blame, but so also was the semi-papal church. So were the mongrel bishops; so were the miserable curates; so were the indulged clergy of the kirk; and so at Bothwell, and often besides, were the stricter presbyterian ministers too. Both the state and the church had then far too much power. The power of the people, the power of popular opinion, and the strong and silent barriers which they throw up against the undue exercise either of our civil or ecclesiastical authority, were in a great measure unknown. Priestly influence backed the wildest claims of Erastianism—priestly influence resisted them, and threatened at times to erect a galling tyranny of its own. It is pleasing to know that this influence was in that age counteracted by so many causes, and principally by the persecution which carried off most of the evils and enhanced most of the benefits of the class-power of clergymen; but less pleasing to remember that the power, when it exists now, exists we fear for more evil than good, and that where it does not, it has been replaced by influences more pestiferous still.

We are taught, next, the failure certain to be incurred in seeking to promote a good object by false or dubious methods. We say not, that the Covenanters, like the Society of Jesus, ever acted on the principle—"Do evil that good may come." Nor do we even say that all or any of them were aware of the full disproportion between their ends and their methods. But it now seems that there was a disparity as monstrous as the famous conjunction described by Horace of a beautiful woman and an ugly fish.

The staff of the glorious star-spangled banner of the Covenant terminated in a blood-reeking sword. Their purpose was as high as heaven—their means were "dunned with the smoke of hell." That these means seemed to them *false*, we are far from asserting. But surely it must have flashed on some of their minds, at moments of peculiar insight, that they were at best *doubtful*. And it was perhaps this very doubt which at times paralyzed and at times precipitated their movements. Men are often wiser than their creeds—that is, than the mere expression they can give to their inward convictions. And so it was sometimes with the Covenanters. They now and then felt, as in fits, how unequal their mechanism to the grandeur of their design, and this either agitated or infuriated them. They were like children surprised at times by God into the language, the thoughts, and the attitudes of grown-up men and women. To unite a land into a band of christian brothers, and pledge them by a covenant ordered and sure to christian duty, was a noble if not then a practicable thought. But to seek this, not by the power of truth, or the influence of conviction, but by the sheer stress of penal enactment or civil war, was a folly which neither deserved to be nor could be successful. Their scheme of uniformity, accordingly, sank, as all such schemes will do; and even the enjoyment of their own liberties was gained by their staunch resistance, and not by active aggression—rather by passive perseverance than by force of arms.

We argue again the utter impossibility of adjusting by any conceivable alliance the conflicting claims of church and state. The notion that these could be harmonized was the deadly, all-poisoning mistake of the period. This prompted the crushing tyrannies and the insulting concessions of the persecuting party. This accounted for many of the blunders of the sufferers. And from the errors and evils produced by this, there has been bequeathed a legacy of lesson peculiarly important. The Covenanting failure in solving this insoluble problem was not, however, more conspicuous or complete, than hundreds of others have been, and as all to the end of time must be.

Who would dare to work at *this* problem, "Given a body of clay, and an immortal spirit to unite them in a living and permanent whole?" This is what God has actually *done* in the human constitution; but what few men have been mad enough to try. And yet the difficulty is not really greater than that implied in this question.—"Given a spiritual dominion—a power coming from and returning to heaven, governed by Divine laws, and working with Divine power—how to incorporate it with a human device, called government: a device of the 'earth, earthy,' and which partakes of all the imperfections of its author, man." Nay, the difficulty is, if possible, greater in the latter case, since God himself has never attempted it. He has given us no precedent for it. He has married body and spirit, but never spiritual truth and human power. The Jewish system was a theocracy — it was homogeneous throughout—it was identification, not incorporation. The kingdom of christianity was "not of this world." Many think that in the latter day there shall be identification again on a larger scale, and in a more lasting form. But, be this as it may, it is clear that God has given no pattern of what, to any but Himself, were an impossibility.

Man, however, in his ignorance and presumption, has sought, in numberless ways, for a result, compared to which the dreams of alchymy and astrology were sober realities. Ever since Constantine qualified himself by a thousand crimes for violating the pure, espoused church of God, have governments, kings, and statesmen, been employed on this search. One is reminded of the attempts made to find out the principle of life. But, alas! not even a Frankenstein has arisen: shapes as ugly and monstrous as his nameless miscreation have been formed by these mistaken craftsmen, but they have been monsters after all, and their life has been rather a ghastly galvanic mimicry than real existence. A list of these various, vain, presumptuous attempts at incarnating the spiritual, and spiritualizing the material, would be at once diverting and melancholy. The element which has generally been used in the different processes has been *blood*. To link

church and state together, or to confirm the trembling tie, what gore has drenched the golden plains of Italy—the mountains of Savoy and Switzerland—the market-places of England—has, in Burke's language, "stained with silent and inglorious torrents the snows of the polar regions, and has made the heather of Caledonia blush a redder crimson!" But other elements, too, of a more degraded though not a deadlier nature have been employed in seeking to form the impossible amalgam. Fraud and falsehood, treachery and deceit, every art which priestcraft could use in the service of power—the breach of every moral principle, and the sacrifice of every christian precept—have been resorted to in the forbidden and desperate research.

And what is now the result? It were long to tell, and painful and shameful to hear. A gallery of the establishments of Europe in this our day might be exhibited, and would be a curious and disgusting spectacle. We will not say, for we do not know, that in every country its established church is the object of hatred, or contempt, or indifference, or mock respect, and lip-deep reverence. But we will say that as means of spreading the gospel they have failed; that as means of conserving error, stereotyping the nonsense of the past, propping up arbitrary power, crushing liberty, and procreating unbelief, they have admirably succeeded: that many countries are groaning under them as under infernal *incubi*—that others have sunk down into the stupid resignation of despair—that others are longing for an opportunity of lifting up the heel against them—and that others are content to accept and bow to them as gilded and indispensable *shams*. The aspect of the continent is that of a huge religious corpse; and while, in accounting for it, one must blame popery much, and arbitrary power much, one cannot fail to remember that an endowed clergy has been a powerful tool in the hands of both.

Taking even the most favourable specimens of the working of the principle in the British churches, need we say much to convince us that their occupation is

gone. We have seen one of them recently rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and that by no flash of state-lightning, but by the hands of its own children, driven desperate by the difficulty of the position in which they were placed, and of the problem given them to solve. We see another holding with feeble grasp the reins of the most unmanageable of nations, which makes no effort to throw it off, simply because, while hating it much, it despises it more. And we find a third—the most powerful and popular establishment in the world—trembling in pangs, and waiting to be delivered of a formidable schism, pulled to and fro by contradictory influences, and whose new exertions and extended organizations and rising churches and cathedrals, remind us of the brilliant and unsubstantial pomps of clouds with which a dying sun half hides and half glorifies his departure. Let no one say that a better and an ideal form of a church-establishment may yet be realized. We recur to the original difficulty—*how* are you legitimately to unite things so unlike and inharmonious? What God hath sundered, how can man join? Think of the difficulties which have encompassed every attempt of the kind, and which are sure to wait, like malignant spirits, around the cradle of every new effort. We dwell not now upon the facts that church-establishments are unscriptural—that they involve, necessarily, great injustice—that they lead to hypocrisy—that they cripple the motions of genuine christianity, and a thousand similar arguments. We simply insist upon the impossibility of the proper co-ordination or smooth working of the two powers. A philosopher invented what he called a pre-established harmony, to explain the mutual action and reaction of the body and the soul. But, certainly, it would require not only a pre-established harmony, but also *occasional causes—i. e.* a perpetual miracle—to secure the comfortable and permanent operation of church and state in alliance.

There are, as we hinted before, but three theories on which the attempt can proceed: the first of subjection, the second of compromise, or bargain, and the third of

identification. The last is, at present, impossible, and reserved for that era when "all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest:" when, under the light of the milder day, all men shall be christians; and when the christian principles inflamed into glory shall hang over the world as its only laws. But this result, we believe, with John Foster, Robert Hall, Edward Irving, William Cowper, and John Milton, can only be produced by a supernatural interference; although we dare not dogmatize as to the *when* or the *how* of that interference, of the certainty of which we are, nevertheless, convinced. With regard to the theory of subjection we may remark, that it is a game at which two can play, and at which two *have* played—Erastianism being the one, and priestly domination the other; and the result has been, either endless bickering or hollow truce: a truce running necessarily into mean compromise or bargain. Indeed, the history of church and state since the christian era may, perhaps, be accurately arranged into, first, the period of dignified neutrality; secondly, of submission (temporary) of the state to the church, becoming more and more abject as the Middle Ages darkened over the earth; thirdly, of fierce contest between the powers; and, fourthly, of their present state of half-settled compromise and ill-adjusted bargain. The period of attempted subjection seems, in the meantime, past, and we need not confute the errors of the dead. But we need, and we can, strongly object to the unhappy system which yet prevails.

Our objections are many, but we have room only for the following:—First, we repudiate the bargain or compromise, because it is unscriptural, and ignores the real meaning and character of a christian church. Because, secondly, it overstretches the legitimate powers and jurisdictions of the state. Because, thirdly, it makes a mere commercial transaction of what is, in scripture, made a religious duty, namely, the pecuniary relation between teachers and taught in the Word. Because, fourthly, it is a bargain which has never been made or ratified by competent authorities: never by the church, as a whole, but

always by individual sections; never or seldom by free states, but almost always by those more or less enslaved. Because, fifthly, it is an unfair and unequal bargain; the concessions on the part of the church being incomparably greater and more damaging than those of the state—the one sacrificing its independence, its spirituality, almost its identity; the other only its well-repaid pelf, and a ray of the cheap sunshine of its smile. And because, sixthly, around these unfair terms there has always raged a contest; the marriage has been at once adulterous and unhappy, and the spring of innumerable perplexities which have beset the statesman, and innumerable degradations and offences which have befallen the church.

Why and for what end was the christian religion introduced into the earth? It was to manifest God's truth to the souls of men; to lift up a testimony against the evils, and to proclaim the transitoriness, of the present world; to erect a banner for truth to be handed down from bleeding hand to bleeding or branded hand, and from age to age; to strike a circle in the sea of the world, which was to widen till it filled it all; to form an *imperium in imperio*, *not* in the sense of ignoring earthly governments in behalf of a hybrid of semi-spiritual, semi-temporal authority, like the pope, but in that of bowing implicitly before an unseen and celestial Power—an empire destined gradually, and by its spiritual energy, aided, indeed, at last, by power from on high, to become universal, undisputed, alone! The plan we have thus in various language and figure described, was, in reality, very simple, and so, too, was its financial scheme:—"The labourer is worthy of his hire." "Freely ye have received, freely give." "Let every man that is taught, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." While the teaching man, as in the early ages, is uneducated, or by trade lowly, give him a carpenter's or tent-maker's wage, and he will be content. When, as time rolls on, he may come to the christian ministry from a higher social position, and amid a higher state of civilisation, give him more of the value his labour and his education require. But never let it be forgotten that this

must be a matter of *individual free will*—that the support of religion, like religion itself, must be a personal matter, and that when this prerogative is transferred to the state it ceases to represent individual will, and sinks from the high sphere of christian duty into that of conventional expediency; it is no more the liberality of many pious persons combining into one, while retaining their individuality, but the tribute to an unloved cause of one fictitious personage called the community, whom you can neither love nor hate, neither praise nor blame, and who can neither be saved nor damned.

Contrast the divine arrangement on this matter with the blunders of man. Compare the "seventy pounds a year with a blessing," of which a venerable clergyman was wont to boast as the voluntary gift of his people and his God, with the thousands extorted by the iron or the indifferent hand of power, and bestowed now upon its proud and greedy minion, and now upon the sadder and wiser man, who shrinks when receiving the bulky bribe as though he were handling the ring of Polycrates. Compare the annals of dissenting churches, defective as they may be thought by some, and but imperfectly working out their own principle—as we freely grant they do, with the bustle, the blood, the pride, the ambition, the secularity, and the determined selfishness which have characterised the history of most church-establishments. We know that such comparisons are always odious, and often tend to bewilder and to blind. But we have great faith in their general truth. The working of the voluntary principle has been often negatively deficient, but the amount of positive evil it has done has been as a drop in the bucket, compared to the ocean of evils which establishments have produced. The voluntary principle has never shed blood; it has never established iniquity, by a law; it has never come between a nation and its conscientious privileges, between God and his worshippers. It may stand up, and, in comparison with the other system, raise its hands to heaven, and say, "These hands are clean; God has preserved his own appointed plan.

from the monstrous and manifold evils of the human device. Wisdom has been justified in this her child."

Let us not be misunderstood. There is such a thing as a legitimate opposition to establishments, which does not embrace their members or ministers. These may be honoured and loved; and the deepest admiration may be felt for those contributions to theology, science, philosophy, and general literature, which have come from the members of the English, Irish, and Scottish establishments. It is with undissembled pain that we are compelled to say a word against the churches with which a Taylor, a Barrow, a Donne, a John Scott, a George Campbell, a Thomas Chalmers, an Andrew Thomson, a Wolf, an Arnold, and a Whately have been or are connected. We have no sympathy at all with those who eagerly extend the war from the system to the men by whom it is supported, and would treat all as fools or villains who nestle under the wings of established churches. But, although popery has had its Pascals and Fenelons, its Bossuets and Massillons, may it not still be an impudent and colossal lie? So, although the roll of the worthies of establishments had been richer than it is, we should have clung to our conviction, that they were great, not because but in spite of the system; that, even were it proved that the system had nourished and cherished *them*, it could be proved, on the other hand, that it had dwarfed and enfeebled the *general* growth, both of the clergy and the laity, and that it was, on the whole, a system opposed to the spirit of christianity, to the progress of man, to liberty, and to justice—to that atmosphere in which religion alone can breathe freely—that it has tended now to shoot into the broad-blown and flaunting flower of popery, and now to shelter the deadliest form of infidelity—that, namely, which hides its nakedness under the fig-tree leaves of outward forms—and, with an oath sealed by sacramental blood, pledges itself to all it never means to do, and attests all it never has believed nor ever will.

We infer, next, the necessity of the complete severance

of the two from a union so inauspicious, so barren in good fruits, and so prolific in the clusters of Sodom and the grapes of Gomorrah. A thousand voices seem to cry out for this, and to mingle as they sound into one tempest of truth, beating against the condemned system. One of these comes from the mountains of Galloway, and as it goes on catches tributary streams of sound from Rullion-green, from the Grassmarket, and from the Bass, and its burden is, "Thou grand error of incorporating christianity with the state—the pure, heavenly religion of Jesus with the false, cruel, avaricious, kingdoms of this world; thou didst slay us and, worse, thou didst cause us to slay others!" Another swells from the noble-hearted dead of puritanic England—from the graves of Cromwell and of Milton—and it says, "Complete the work we began; forget our errors, emulate our sincerity, and kill the tyrant still extant, who killed or conquered us! Less ghostly and nearer voices are speaking to the same purpose. They come, or should come, from a state burdened and made all but desperate by the perplexities connected with church matters;—from churches torn by dissension, surrounded with foes, menaced with inexperienced dangers, sapped by infidelity, stumbling in the strange darkness of this twilight era, and beginning to feel that "vain is the help of man;"—from the ranks of dissent, which are increasing, if not consolidating, every day, and which have lost all hope of much more good resulting, whatever more evil may issue, from this ambiguous alliance;—from those half dissenters, who, without abandoning the principle, as they call it, of establishments, are doing all they can to destroy them in the concrete;—from most of our profounder political philosophers, who have weighed them in their balances and found them wanting;—from multitudes of our sceptics, too, who do not see what an argument against themselves the removal of these anti-christian institutions would furnish, and what a prop to the power of infidelity they at present supply, and, above all, from the masses of the people who need only further information on the subject, a stronger breath to blow up the embers of their

feelings, and especially an extension of their political rights, to push the question to its crisis, and to shake down, by the mighty rushing wind of their will, those towers which are already tottering to their fall.

It is not here asserted that the overthrow of ecclesiastical establishments will be enough. This is not propounded as a panacea, but advocated as an act of justice, expediency, and present necessity, which will, moreover, remove much evil and introduce much good. It is advocated, in Paul's language, as "good for the present distress." It might not cure, but it would greatly relieve, the patient. It would not come down like an immediate divine influence upon the church, but it would give it a strong and sudden impulse in the right direction. Rash revivalists have been compared to sailors in a great ship becalmed, going up to the sails and trying, by the minute puffs of their own breath, to propel it along. Voluntaries do not act in this foolish and presumptuous manner; on the contrary, they would put an end to such preposterous attempts as are made, not by such revivalists, but by church establishments—they would simply lighten the ship, tell every man to keep his post, and wait for the promised wind.

It has often been asked, What would be the effects produced by the abolition of church-establishments? and direful have been the pictures drawn of rampant infidelity, increasing ignorance, new and strange forms of fanaticism, rising out of the gulf into which the money-bags had gone down, the inferior soils of the church-territory thrown out of cultivation, the highlands and islands of Scotland neglected, of starving ministers, uneducated youth, growing irreligion and carelessness, and, in fine, a period of anarchy, a reign of terror, a millennium of political madness and moral degradation. It is unnecessary to argue at length against a nightmare; and that this is nothing more will probably appear to those who remember that christianity is not identified with church-establishments—that christianity would survive them—that the religion of the land is already travelling out of those institutions, and not

losing but gaining vigour the further it travels—that the destruction of establishments is not the same thing with the destruction of the powerful sects established, which would remain, and probably increase—that the removal of endowed churches would loosen the energy of dissent—that were they down, infidelity would lose some of its evil by losing all its deceit, and the foam of fanaticism would have a less prominent mark at which to expend its fury—that education would become less sectarian—that while cant and hypocrisy would be lessened, whatever religion existed would be sincerer and more decided—that, in all probability, such an impetus would be then given to the church as would, ere it spent its force, carry it in a spring-tide into the most destitute corners of the land, and that, by the removal of establishments, many of the barriers to christian union which at present exist would be taken down, and the platform cleared for the first *real* Evangelical Alliance. As to the terrible relaxation of belief and of conduct anticipated from their fall—why this began in their palmy days, it has spread in spite of them, and there is some reason to believe that, were they sacrificed, like the horses in a Russian sledge to the pursuing wolves, that the course of the destroyer would be materially checked, if not altogether stopped. Those are not, however, utopians or optimists, who take this view of the immediate consequences of the overthrow of endowments. They are right to stamp, if they can, contempt and discredit upon the dark dreams of those who regard their downfall with horror and despair. Let those who indulge them, besides, think of the experiences of the past and of the present; consult the pages of history—that "faithful and true witness." Let them remember what the energy of the voluntary principle did in the first ages, and in maintaining afterwards, on many an unequal or bloody field, the cause of christianity; let them see what it is doing in America,* in many dissenting churches, and in the great

* This subject will be found most conclusively treated in The Test of Experience, by John Howard Hinton, M.A. (Cockshaw, London. Price 1s.)

missionary enterprise, and then dismiss their foolish or pretended fears as to its success when it works on a broader scale and under the brightening sunshine of the better ages which seem at no great distance.

But this leads, by a natural transition, to the next remark —the power of the voluntary principle. Surely this is a fair and solid inference from the Covenanting struggle. It was that principle which, like the ravens of Elijah, fed the ministers in the desert. It was it which, in that full development of its power, "turned the stones into bread." "Silver and gold had they none," and, although their privations were many, their consolations and comforts were not few, and were all furnished by the free will of a poor peasant people. Blessing, as they must, the hands which fed them, could they, or can any, now at least, curse the principle of christian finance, which, unconsciously, indeed, opened these hands? Sweet to them, doubtless, those firstlings of free-will—sweeter than all the *tiends* they had enjoyed before or afterwards. But returning, they, like Pharaoh's butler, "remembered not Joseph, but forgat him," and sank from sublime heaven-fed prophets into respectable stipendiaries of the state.

It is by no means necessary here to demonstrate that the voluntary principle has effected all that it ought to have done, or all that it is capable of accomplishing. On the contrary, it may be admitted that it has not yet borne its full fruits or developed a tithe of its inherent energy; that while in the cities and towns of Great Britain it secures a goodly amount of accommodation for worshippers, and a respectable maintenance to the ministers of religion, yet that, in rural and thinly-populated districts, the life of the minister is one of great hardship and privation, borne for the most part with great heroism and christian patience. But in connexion with this, it should be remembered, that, while one or more state establishments of religion exist, the voluntary principle has no opportunity of developing its resources. Not only the utterly careless, but also the less earnest, portion of society, rest in the vague notion that no ex-

ertions on their part are necessary for the support of religion, inasmuch as ample provision for that purpose is made by the state; just as many selfish persons plead the existence of a poor-law in bar of all claims on their private charity. Wherein, then, lies the remedy for the confessed short-comings in the operation of the voluntary principle?

It is necessary that the truth on this matter should be freely, publicly, and boldly spoken and enforced; and this liberal laymen and congregations may do far more effectually than ministers. After all that has been admitted, voluntaryism is doing wonders. In cities, laymen are in general active, liberal, and kind to their pastors. Let *them* try to extend the infection of their influence. Let *them* spread information upon the subject. Let *them* issue tracts and hold meetings. They will do it with far more gracefulness in the manner, and with far more efficacy in the result. Never till then shall the withering taunts of the opposite party be withered and extinguished in their turn.

It is obvious, however, to remark that the reproach of the voluntary principle failing adequately to support its ministers, comes with a very bad grace from the Scottish opponents of dissent. For, is the state using *them* very well? Has it not quarrelled with nearly one-half of their number? And have not the rations it furnishes to the remainder sadly diminished? And is there much prospect of the state either mending the "commons" it gives to the one party, or renewing offers of conciliation and re-union with the other? No, verily! The situation of none of the great religious parties of Scotland, in a commercial point of view, is at all enviable; but surely it is far better to stand with the United Presbyterian church and the Independents upon the rugged rock of Christ's fixed principle of christian finance—that of each charge feeding each minister—than upon the precarious sand of a reluctant and intolerant government, or on the uncertain and capricious resources of a general fund. Nor, perhaps, is it a vain boast to say, "The

compulsory system must decrease, but the voluntary must increase!" Must, because it has the stamp of God—the grandeur of age—the freshness of youth—the word of the wise, and the voice of the people—the verdict of the church and of the world—the spirit of christianity, and the spirit of the age—united in its favour.

The bearing of the whole subject upon the present state of the important question which respects the true relations of the church and the state, remains to be very briefly considered.

Never was there a period when watchfulness was more the wisdom of all parties than at present; for never, assuredly, was the word more true, that we know not what a day may bring forth. It is as when God said, "I have appointed thee a day for a year." The restless change and excitement of this age approach the brink of hurry and of frenzy. "Many are running to and fro." This is found in education, and in the entrance of the young into the world. Childhood now grows more rapidly into youth, and youth into manhood, and manhood into age. An almost preternatural activity has seized on all things. It has seized on the brain of the community, which is trembling under the tension it is now called on to endure—a tension issuing sometimes in madness, sometimes in early death, and sometimes in premature and permanent exhaustion. It has seized upon the imagination and the heart and the intellect of man. It has changed commercial enterprise into a fierce fever, instead of a strong and steady pulse of energy. It has given a morbid power, activity, and heat, to the progress of mechanical invention, of art, of literature, and science. With a like nervous and earnest hand, this spirit of restless enterprise is grasping the Californian pickaxe, the telescope, the pencil, and the pen. To this tremendous energy railways and telegraphs are found no more than adequate conductors, and with it even the unseen powers seem to keep time; for are not death and destruction going on at railway speed? and is not the grave's everlasting cry, "Give, give," becoming, as it were, quicker in its utterance,

permitting fewer pauses in its fell requests, and less delay in the execution of its inevitable doom? Is not nature, too, hurrying, as in sympathy, to display her most precious collections of treasure, and to open all her doors, that our race, ere it be too late, may enter in? Is it not as if, in man's mysterious composition, the brain and nervous energy were becoming singular and supreme, fast budding into a higher organisation; and as if, in man's mysterious history, we were, by swift stages, approaching a crisis, under which he must either sink and be extinguished, or over which he will soar up into a nobler destiny, and enter on a more illustrious career? Hall said of the signs of *his* time, that it seemed as if the "great drama of things were winding up;" but what would he have said now when the incidents and catastrophes which closed the eighteenth century seem, as compared to the deeper and more varied phenomena of the nineteenth, like the bursting of a bubble, or the shattering of a sea-shell, to the conflagration of a city, or the explosion of a world. Verily, old things are fast passing away—all things are becoming new.

"The day," says an eloquent writer, "has at length dawned—the universal day. Throughout Europe men are everywhere shaking off the slumber of fifteen hundred years. Eyes are fairly open, and, as the morning world comes in upon them, they feel, for the first time, that to dream is not to live. During the long night, we have slumbered and slept, and in it, sleeping or dreaming, or, perhaps, opening a lid in the tossings of a dream, we had come to forget daylight, to call night day, to be content with sleep as the first duty of man, and to be resigned to darkness as the first ordinance of God. But, in the spiritual, as well as in the physical world, the will of the sleeper neither makes nor repeals the night, neither hurries nor retards the dawn which at midnight was setting out to us from the antipodes!"

"What I say unto one, I say unto all, Watch." No time for slumber when the world is awake—nay, is heaving in its pangs, is travailing to be delivered—and

when angels have started from their thrones to watch the birth, and to name the child. If the advocates of religious freedom, in this crisis, will slumber, it must be at their peril. A single year may destroy or secure the triumph of their cause. At one election, golden opportunities may occur never again to be renewed. One change of ministry may be big with portentous consequences. Should they sleep out one prophetic hour, they may awake with the gripe of arbitrary power on their throat. And not only are they to wake, but to wake *on their arms.* They are not only to watch, but to be ready also; for in such an hour as they think not their twilight may sink into midnight, or may brighten into morn.

Many of the dissenters, both in England and Scotland, are doubtless aware of the critical circumstances in which they are placed—between infidelity on the one hand, and prelacy, half married to popery, on the other—and are formed into a great committee of vigilance; but many, too, are sunk in deep lethargy, saying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," doting on nominal alliances, and on the hundred christian schemes which seem going on so smoothly, and deaf to the sounds of approaching contest, which every wind is bringing to our ears. It is in these men's hearing that one would wish to ring the alarum-bell—to tell them that if they are expecting easy slipshod times they are terribly mistaken—that if they be true dissenters, they must be ready to fight as well as to build; and that, if they love their own ancient banner, they must be prepared, at the shortest summons, to rally around it.

"Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!"

The opponents of the union of church and state are called, with great urgency, to union in their efforts. It is unnecessary to repeat the commonplaces about the necessity of union for obtaining any object; it is enough simply to say, that the advocates of ecclesiastical equality are nothing, if not united. Their only hope, numerous and influential as they are, is in moving altogether, if they move at all. The system they oppose is so old—so plau-

sibly defended by its friends—so falteringly opposed by many of its professed foes, and so warmly, *though secretly, loved* by many who rank not among its supporters, that nothing but one strong, simultaneous movement can prevail to overthrow it. Of such a union there are, at present, but few symptoms. Wretched partizanships and prejudices, and narrow religious views, have disturbed the onward movement—have made some shrink back in fear, others step aside in indolent indifference, and others enter into armistices, of which it is enough to say that they are hollow, false, and fated to the short life which their demerits deserve.

The class to which we are referring are, at present, in a most peculiar position. They stand, as has been said, midway between the fierce aggressive infidelity of the day, and the milder, slower, slyer, but yet more deadly, progress of religious intolerance. So far from being, as they are often called, extreme men, they are, in fact, placed exactly and critically in the middle; and their great duty has become that of moderation; understanding this word in a wise and large signification. Resisting and detesting ecclesiastical domination with all their heart and soul, they are not to be driven by that hatred to support any measures for suppressing it contrary to their own principles, to even the semblance of persecution. On the other hand, while admitting that infidelity has found many palliations in the heartless sham to which unhallowed connection with the state has in a great measure reduced the church, they are not for a moment to disguise their aversion to it: their intense conviction that scepticism, now, as formerly, is a smoke from the pit, however bright may be the sparkles of genius, and however warm the flaming "tongues" of sincerity, which, in the present day, are mingling with its blackness of darkness. Let them ever remember that true moderation is not the dilution, but the sublimation, of honesty and firmness. Let them remember, too, that the interests of christianity have a higher claim upon them than those of any ecclesiastical question, and that

they ought to value the latter principally because they are profoundly connected with those of the former.

They are called, moreover, to invincible perseverance; and this, after all, is not such a difficult duty. Were it to persevere for some great section of eternity it were something formidable. But it is only holding our breath, husbanding our strength, preserving our faith and our firm courage for a few short years—and doing this, too, as in every good cause it must be, with an absolute certainty that our object shall be gained. Who in such circumstances would, having put his hand to the plough, look back? Truly, "returning were as tedious as go o'er." To faint either at the beginning or the close of a great day's journey is excusable, but not so to falter and flag in the middle. Should not the stirring stanza of Longfellow rouse and startle like the sound of a trumpet, and should not every heart respond to it?

> "Let us, then, be up and doing,
> With a heart for any fate;
> Still achieving, still pursuing,
> Learn to *labour* and to *wait*."

Another duty appropriate to the champions of ecclesiastical freedom and equality, is prayer. Their adversaries are still mighty, and they must, by prayer, "move an infinite force in their behalf." They must get the thunderbolts to aid them! Some are afraid of praying for the purity of God's church and for the liberty of man, lest they should be guilty of political praying. This, surely, is an absurd fear. How dare they attempt to promote an object for which they dare not pray? And without prayer how can they expect to succeed in the least of their designs?—how much less in an earnest life-and-death contest like this? Are they verily persuaded that their cause is that of God—that they are going along with him in shaking down a temple of Dagon—and will they not, like Samson, cry to the God of heaven to help them? Some might, perhaps, have condemned Samson's prayer for presumption, although it *did* obtain an answer in that ruinous overwhelming that avenged the loss of his two eyes. Let

them cry with a louder and deeper voice, and our God is not an idol—not a brute Dagon, or a deaf Baal,—that he should not hear them. He listened to the cry from the furnaces and the stakes of the early christian persecutions—to the voice of prayer which mingled with the dash of infants and mothers down the rocks of Piedmont—to the prayers which ascended from the great solitary soul of Milton, as if from a nation in whose sky the sun had faded—and to the mountain-orisons, unwearied, heaven-scaling, which came from the lips of the wrestling presbyterians in Scotland. Their injuries are not so great as these, but why should their prayers be less fervent? Prayer would purify their cause still more; would spiritualize still more in their motives; would tend to unite their ranks; would abash their enemies; and would hasten, by ages, the period when this shall be the spirit and the law and the practice of the universal church, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

And shall this really be the result of those mighty movements in the church and the world, or what shall it be? Some people appear to imagine that no result at all commensurate to the commencement shall issue from them. They affect to despise and contemn the progress of society. Hence repeated sneers and long and loud laughter at the "March of Intellect." So laughs the maniac at the ocean which is giving him a grave! So laughed the Philistines, when Samson was brought in from his prison-house to make them sport. If, indeed, these waters of change which have set in so strongly, and which are fanned as by the breath of a thousand storms, were employed merely in wafting feathers or in drowning flies, then could we account for this derision—if this gigantic and God-strengthened Samson were merely occupied in tearing down some crazy and condemned fabric, then could we account for such laughter as might well-nigh drown the noise of the achievement. Let these men laugh, indeed, as long as they are the mere bubbles which these despised waters are driving scorn-

fully on! But, if ever their age should exchange contempt for indignation, then let the men who despise its spirit, and rail at its improvements, and will not even admit that it is advancing, beware how they meddle with such a majestic thing—how they laugh at what is engulfing all on which their hearts and hopes were fixed.

Yes, in spite of such sneerers, the number of whom is falling off every day, out of these movements something serious and of deep moment—something, too, so glorious as to crown the earth with a golden pinnacle—must be evolved. We speak not of the voluntary question alone—we have already disclaimed utopianism on that score—but of the thousand other movements, of which it is an important unit. How can it otherwise be? Have the elements of society been all but dissolved? Has the world been agitated to its centre? Has revolution after revolution flashed fearfully across the political heavens? Have all things, from the old hereditary dunghill of the beggar to the old hereditary throne of the king, been shaken, and shall nothing come forth? Are all things falling, and shall nothing be erected in their stead? No! men "look for new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness." Men look for a new earth—a new constitution of society, more skilfully adapted to promote the interests of man—a society, in which they may look for slavery, and will not find it; for war, and will not find it; for corruption, and will not find it; for party feeling, and will not find it; for the mad rising of the oppressed and despairing, and will not find it; for class legislation, and will not find it; for the trample of the tyrant, and will not find it; for the insolence of a selfish aristocracy, and will not find it—for the "former things are passed away." Men look for new heavens—a new constitution of the church, after its primitive model, in which they may look for priestly pride, and will not find it; for ghostly imposture, and will not find it; for a starved clergy, on the one hand, and a stalled episcopacy on the other, and will not find them; for established churches, and will not find them; for sectarian division,

and will not find it; for the petty jealousies and mean malignities and despicable underminings of rival bodies, and will not find them—for here, also, the "former things are for ever passed away."

> "The vast unbounded prospect lies before me,
> But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it."

Confident, as all may be, of the future triumph of truth and righteousness in this world, they need not be blind to those influences which still do and, for a considerable period, may, retard it. The present state of Europe is one of these, and continues to "perplex in the extreme" all political thinkers. The spirit of liberty seems crushed for a time on the continent. Despotism is spreading its black wings over all Europe—Great Britain (and Belgium partially) excepted. And Great Britain falls from time to time under a conservative government. America is groaning under her own internal evils, and seems disinclined or paralysed for any active exertions in the cause of liberty. And the Hercules of Australia is yet in his cradle, fitter, hitherto, to brush away flies at the diggings, than to strangle serpents, and too far removed, besides, to give us efficient help for a long period. And, altogether, the question comes on the world with a somewhat dark augury, "What is to be the end of these things?"

A still more painful phenomena must be noticed. The simple child-like faith of our fathers is in deep jeopardy; christianity itself is undergoing the fierce tortures of a German furnace, and though it will certainly be saved, yet it shall be saved so as by fire. A rash and crude analysis has thrust it into its alembic, and is, with malignant and impatient eye, watching the unfinished process. Religious belief, in short, has with many either expired or reached the last degree of uncertainty.

Other shadows of doubts and difficulty lie along the path, not only of the voluntary movement, but of the progress of christianity and of the race. But this dark

part of the subject has not been alluded to for the purpose of inculcating utter hopelessness, but merely to warn of danger, and to stimulate to duty. The state of Europe must improve. One bubble throne will soon go down, without, perhaps, even a tinge of blood lending it its only glory. Injured Italy and trampled Hungary are biding their times. Britain will soon sicken of conservative ministries, and America of the blood of its slaves. The cause of freedom will grow like Samson's hair, which a Delilah could cut off, but which not all the Philistines of Gaza could hinder to grow. The current of scepticism will subside. Things, indeed, may be worse ere they are better in this respect. But, nevertheless, let the sifting go on. Let intellectual men continue to flock away, as they are, alas! in many instances, flocking, from our churches; let philosophers, in their conclaves, take the truth of christianity for granted, and laugh at you if you deny their statement; let politicians treat it simply as an earthly fact, and a matter of mere polity; let misled and unhappy men of genius rave at it as having "gone out;" let even friendly critics of the external evidences find them but problematical—all this might have been expected; all this had been foretold; all this, meanwhile, is rather to be desired; all this never touches the real merits of the christian case, or affects the verdict which man's conscience and his heart have long ago returned in favour of real christianity. All this, while thinning our professed ranks, ought to intensify the zeal, hope, and activity of those who remain; and all this will serve to precipitate the crisis, when men, in their misery and darkness, sick of mere science, of mere literature, of mere philosophy, mere political advancement, and mere religious naturalism, shall return, shall ask, crave, and obtain, a sublimer form of christianity than the world, since Christ, ever saw.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon what, nevertheless, may well be felt as a firm conviction—that a grand supernatural intervention must aid and abet, and perhaps supplant, at last, every other scheme for the salvation of

the church and the regeneration of the earth. To enter on this subject were foreign to the purpose of this book, and might even be construed into a covert attempt to lessen men's opinion of the power and virtue of the voluntary principle. And yet, while denying this inference and, on the other hand, refusing to assert too explicitly the substance of a strong belief, we say, nevertheless, that this confident faith is, at least, harmless in its consequences—that it is not devoid of cheering influence in those dark unhappy times—that it is at present holding the calm yet firm hand of restraint upon many a spirit which might sink into sullen despair, or strike out upon the sad and shoreless sea of unbelief, and that, in divers forms and degrees, it has lain at the heart of almost all the christian sages and poets of mankind—of Milton, whose eloquent sighs after it seem the echoes of the Creation's own voice panting for the glorious liberty of the sons of God—of poor Cowper, to which he clung to the very depths of his misery, and surely the groans of this "stricken deer that left the herd," have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth—that it comforted the majestic spirit of Robert Hall, upon his death-bed—that in one of its forms it shed a gleam of hope through the shaded window of Foster's soul—and seems also to have captivated, if not entirely convinced, near the end, the ever open and elastic and sanguine mind of Chalmers.

But, be the means what they may, the final result is certain. And let us close by painting the future state of the world and the church, in words—not of poetry, but of prose, kindling up toward it—not of ours, but of another, not even coinciding full with our views, but surely worthy of all admiration in their terse and simple magnificence, like a paragraph of Tacitus, without his intricacy :—

"How delightful the prospects which open on the eye of faith, in prophetic vision! Christianity prevails universally, and the consequences are most blissful. Our race assumes the appearance of one vast, virtuous, peaceful family. Our world becomes the seat of one grand,

triumphant, adoring assembly. At length, the scene mingles with the heavens, and, rising in brightness, is blended with the glories on high. The mystery of God on earth is finished. The times of the regeneration are fulfilled. The Son of God descends. The scene closes [*begins* rather!] with divine grandeur. 'And I heard, as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.'"*

The over-wearied spirit of humanity crieth out AMEN.

* From an Essay on India, by the late amiable and excellent Dr. Mitchell of Glasgow.

APPENDIX.

THE MASSACRE OF GLENCOE (*see page* 121).

The occasion of the massacre of Glencoe was as follows: The Earl of Breadalbane had received from government a large sum of money to bribe the rebellious clans to submission to King William's authority. Some dispute or difference of opinion had arisen as to the distribution of the bribes. Breadalbane began to suspect that the chieftains meant to deceive and hoodwink him. Whether right or wrong in this belief, he betrayed his suspicions to government. They, on the month of August, 1691, issued a proclamation, enjoining all and each of them to take the oaths to the government of William and Mary, previous to the 1st day of January, 1692. In this proclamation, too, it was threatened that all who did not submit to these terms, should be punished by the utmost rigours of fire and sword.

This proclamation was drawn up by Sir John Dalrymple, or the Master of Stair, in conjunction with Breadalbane. He had wished to form a highland army in favour of government, and to get, if possible, all the highland chiefs to transfer their allegiance from King James to the new dynasty. This he found, however, very difficult. The chiefs were fond enough of the money, but fonder, at heart, of the Stewarts. Many of them, including the MacDonalds, stood out for more favourable terms—the negotiation was broken off, and the fatal proclamation was issued.

We believe it is certain, that Stair began now to entertain the private hope that the chiefs would not submit at all, or, at least, that they would hold out beyond the prescribed term, and, in the "gloomy recesses of a mind

capacious of such things," had determined to make the broad highlands a monument of his vengeance. He had collected troops at Inverlochy—he had resolved to take the advantage of the winter, when the passes would be stopped, when the highlanders would not be expecting an attack, and would become an easy prey. And thus, like a tiger on the edge of his jungle, did this inhuman lawyer lie eagerly waiting for his hour.

The chiefs, however, were on their guard. Within the prescribed time, they, one by one, submitted to the terms of the proclamation. It has been said that this was at the secret suggestion of King James, who had penetrated Lord Stair's purpose, and had directed his friends rather to forswear their consciences than to lose their lives.

As chief after chief took the oath of allegiance, Stair became more and more chagrined, and increasingly anxious that some one of the clans should refuse, and become the victim of his revenge. And one such tribe at last did fall into his vindictive and quivering jaws. This was the tribe of the MacDonalds, inhabiting, as a "munition of rocks," the valley of Glencoe.

Glencoe is a softened Sinai—Sinai unscorched and uncrowned with all the leading features of that "great and terrible mountain" transferred to Scotland. Many of our readers may have seen the dissolving view of that mount which was crowned with a diadem of fire, and where the Ancient One came down to utter the ten precepts of the law. Then they have also, it may be said, seen the ridges of Glencoe. There are, indeed, many diversities. Through the valley of Glencoe winds a stream called the Cona—a name of perfect music, soft as softest Italian, and which seems the very echo of the tender and everlasting wail of a lonely river. No such stream laves the foot of Sinai's savage hill. Then there lies, below one of the boldest hills of the pass, a lovely lake, looking up with child-like, trustful, untrembling eye, to the lowering summits above; and a fine verdure here and there creeps up the precipices, and green pastures and still waters encompass hills on which Aaron might

have waited for death, or Moses ascended to meet God—features all unlike those of the Syrian wilderness. But the mural aspect of many of the precipices, the rounded shape of some of the mountains, contrasted with the sharp razor-like ridges of others—the deep and horrid clefts and ravines which yawn here and there—the extent, dreariness, solitude, and grandeur of the whole mountain-range above—the summits you see, but scarcely see, behind their nearer brethren, as though retiring, like proud and lonely spirits, into their own inaccessible hermitages—the appearance of convulsion, and tearing in pieces, and rending in twain, and fierce unreconciliation, which rests, like a black jagged wing, over the whole region—were all those of Horeb, as it might be seen in picture and in dreams ; and the beholder becomes, for a season, silent and awe-struck, as if waiting for another avatar of the deity, upon those thunder-split and shaggy peaks. Another image which suggests itself, was that of two ranges of tempest-tossed mountain-waves of ocean, with a wide interspace of comparative calm between them, suddenly arrested and stiffened into eternal granite. One mountain itself excites peculiar emotion. It is round-headed—knotted, too, with round rocks—it comes nearer the valley than the rest, although without impending over it—it is extremely steep, and has a large fissure glaring eastward over the glen, "like a gash on warrior's breast." This is called, popularly, Ossian's cave, and perhaps the hill is also called Ossian's hill. It might be named Mount Moses ; for it seems an exact similitude of the precipitous and one-pathed mountain, up which that lonely man panted and quaked to meet with a thunder-shrouded and lightning-guarded God.

Further down, the valley becomes softer in its character ; the mountains retire still further from it ; the Cona murmurs gentler measures as it glides onwards to Loch Leven, where it is to be lost ; and at a bend of the stream, on a green level meadow, about two miles from the Loch, at a place where, according to Talfourd, "the wild myrtle grows in great profusion," stood the cottage of the leader

of the clan, MacDonald, and was transacted that massacre which all ages shall arise and call accursed.

"As the clime is, so the heart of man." The MacDonalds were worthy of their savage scenery, and more savage weather. True "children of the mist" were they—strong, hardy, fearless—at feud with the adjacent Campbells—the clan to which Breadalbane belonged—and, although their number never amounted to more than two hundred armed men, their name was a terror throughout all that country, and repeatedly had the blood of the race of Dermid smoked upon their swords. Their leader bore the patronymic title of MacIan. He is described as a man of distinguished courage and sagacity, venerable in aspect, stately in bearing, and moved among his neighbouring chieftains like a demigod. He had followed Claverhouse to Killiecrankie ; he had had, along with the other chiefs, a meeting to adjust differences with Breadalbane, and had come there to open rupture and recrimination with the earl. He knew, and said afterwards, that Breadalbane was his foe, and would yet try to do him injury. And still, with a strange inconsistency, amounting almost to infatuation, he deferred taking the oath, and thereby securing his safety, till the appointed time had nearly expired.

This was a mode of conduct entirely after Stair's own heart, who, in a letter dated the 3rd of December,—a month before the limits of the indemnity were reached—had expressed an ardent hope, that some of the clans, and especially the MacDonalds of Glencoe, would "fall into the net,"—*i.e.* afford the government some tolerable pretext for their destruction.

A few days, however, before the 1st of January, Colonel Hill is sitting in his room, in Fort William, when some strangers claim an audience. There enter several highlandmen clad in the MacDonald tartan, with its intense centre of blue, lying amid variegated squares of green, and occasional cross-lines of white—one towering in stature and dignity of bearing above the rest—all armed, but all in an attitude of submission. They are MacIan and the

leaders of his tribe, who have come at the eleventh hour, to swear the oath of allegiance to King William. The colonel, a soldier and a gentleman, is glad and yet grieved to see them. For alas! being a military and not a civil officer, he has *no power* to receive their oath. He tells them so—and the old chieftain first remonstrates, and at last in his agony, *weeps;* perhaps his first tears since childhood—like the waters of the Cona breaking over the stony channels of Glencoe! The tears of a brave old man are the most affecting of all tears, and the colonel, moved to the heart, writes out a letter to Sir Colin Campbell, sheriff of Argyleshire, requesting him, although legally too late, to receive the submission of the chief; and with this letter in his *sporran mouloch*, away in haste hies the belated MacIan from Fort William to Inverary.

The road to Inverary led to within a mile of MacIan's house, but such was his haste that he did not even turn aside to enter it. He pushed on through horrible paths, rendered worse by a heavy fall of snow—for the very elements seemed to combine in the conspiracy against the doomed MacDonalds. In consequence, notwithstanding all the speed he could exert, he reached Inverary too late, —the 1st of January was past.

He told, however, his story, and the sheriff—who seems to have been a humane and sensible man—on considering all the circumstances, did not hesitate to administer the oath, and sent off a message to the Privy Council announcing the fact, and explaining all the reasons of his conduct. He also wrote to Colonel Hill, requesting him to take care that his soldiers should not molest the MacDonalds till the pleasure of the Privy Council on the matter was known.

Meanwhile, Stair had procured and issued two proclamations. The first, that of the 11th of January, contained peremptory orders for military measures of fire and sword against all that had not taken the oath within the term prescribed, providing, however, that, were they promptly to submit, they might even yet obtain mercy.

The second, which appeared on the 16th, while still holding out the hope of indulgence to the other clans, expressly excepted the inhabitants of Glencoe, in the following words:—"As for MacIan of Glencoe, and that tribe, if they can well be distinguished from the rest of the highlanders, it will be proper, for the vindication of public justice, to extirpate that set of thieves."

In order to procure such savage and wholly needless proclamations (for be it observed all the highlanders, without exception, had now submitted) from the king, very extraordinary measures had been used. The letter of the sheriff had been suppressed—the certificate of MacIan's having taken the oath had been blotted out from the books of council—and, there can be little doubt, private communications had represented the MacDonalds as obstinate rebels. At all events, King William, with his own hand, and not that of his secretary, subscribed and superscribed orders for the destruction of the entire tribe.

Stair lost no time in executing the bloody commission. He wrote to Colonel Hill enjoining them to be "slaughtered, and that the manner of execution must be *sure, secret and effectual*." Hill shrank in grief and horror from the task; and, after trying for some time to evade it, at last transferred the orders to Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton, and directed him to take four hundred men of a highland regiment belonging to the Duke of Argyle, and consisting, consequently, of Campbells—the neighbours and acquaintances—some of them friends of, and more of them at feud with, the MacDonalds. This seemed necessary, to bring the matter to its blackest point.

Toward the close of January, a company of armed highlanders are seen wending their way up the banks of Loch-Leven to the opening of the valley. The MacDonalds, on hearing of this, are, at first, apprehensive that they have come to seize their arms, and they send them away accordingly to a distant and secure spot. This done, they go forth to meet them. They find it is a party of Argyle's soldiers, commanded by Captain Campbell, of Glenlyon,

whose niece is married to Alaster MacDonald, one of MacIan's sons. They ask whether they have come as friends or as foes. The reply is that they have come as friends — that as the garrison at Fort William is overcrowded, they have been sent to quarter themselves for a short period in Glencoe. They are received with all the warmth of highland hospitality. Feuds, political grudges, are all forgotten, and a fortnight passes away in the mutual exchange of every kindly office. Well, indeed, says Shakspere—"A man may smile, and smile, and be a villain." Thus they had continued till, at last, there arrive orders from Major Duncanson, commanding Campbell to put all the MacDonalds below seventy to the sword, at four in the morning precisely, and to take especial care that the old fox and his cubs do not escape, threatening him at the same time that, if he do not fulfil the orders, he shall be treated as not true to the king and government. Duncanson had been instructed to this by Hamilton, who in his despatch used the remarkable words—"*The Government are not to be troubled with prisoners.*"

This order is dated 12th February, and reached Glenlyon's hands a few hours after. He speedily put it into execution. Well did he, meanwhile, play the hypocritical part. He had every day taken his "morning" as it was called —*i.e.*, a draught of raw usquebaugh, drunk on rising— in the house of his connexion, Alaster MacDonald. Nor had he omitted it on the morning before the massacre. He and two of his officers, moreover, accepted an invitation next day to dine with old MacIan, whom they had destined to dine that day with death. And on the night of the 12th we see John and Alaster MacDonald *playing at cards* with their murderer, in his own quarters.

The MacDonalds had all retired to rest with the exception of the two sons of MacIan. Their suspicions had been, in some measure, aroused in reference to Campbell. They had noticed that, when evening came on, the main-guard was strengthened, and the sentinels increased. They had heard, too, (as in that immortal description of Pollok, of the signs preceding the judgment)—

"Earnest whispers ran along the hills
At dead of night,
And all the words they heard were spoke of them."

They had overheard the *sotto voce* talk of the soldiers, complaining that they were compelled to such an infernal service, while, very naturally, laying the chief blame of it upon their officers. Stung to a sudden consciousness of danger which was prophetic, and which, perhaps, secured their safety, the sons of MacIan rushed from their apartment to the military quarters, and found Glenlyon and his men getting ready their arms. They asked him, what was the meaning of all this; and if aught was intended against them. He replied, with dauntless effrontery, that he and his men were thinking of an expedition against Glengarry's people, and added, "If anything evil had been intended would I not have told Alaster and my niece?" Grumbling, yet in some measure satisfied, the two young men return to their own dwellings.

All now is silent over that devoted valley. A heavy snow-storm has indeed begun to fall, but as yet is reserving its full fury for a later hour in the morning, when there shall be fugitives partly to sink, but principally to shelter, under its drifts. The voice of the Cona is choked in ice. The great heights that tower behind—have no thunders or voices to proclaim the approaching doom. MacIan himself is sleeping the sound, deep sleep of innocence and security: the fatigues and mortifications of his journeys to Fort William and Inverary all forgotten. Suddenly, at four precisely,—for the devil is as punctual as the Deity—a knock is heard at his door. It is opened immediately, and the old man bustles up to dress himself, and to order refreshments for those early visitors. Without a moment's warning—without a preliminary word—he is shot dead, and falls back on the bed, into the arms of his aged wife! She is next assailed—stripped—the gold rings on her fingers torn off by the teeth of the soldiers, and so maltreated, that in a day she shall die! All the servants and clansmen in the same house are massacred.

All, save one. He, an aged domestic, somehow escapes

and, running to the abode of the two brothers, cries out "Is it time for you to be sleeping when your father is murdered on his own hearth?" They arise in haste—they hurry out, and hear all around them from every house and habitation, shrieks, shots, shouts, groans, the roar of muskets, and the cries of men, women, and children, combined into one harmony of Hell. One wonders how *they* were not assailed as soon as their father, and is tempted to suspect that Glenlyon, after all, had some pity for his niece's husband. As it was, they made for the mountains and, by their knowledge of dark and devious paths through that howling wilderness, were enabled to escape.

What a glen did they leave behind them! and what a morning! The snow is falling thick, and is thickening every moment. In the valley there is not a house but there is one, or more than one, dead. Led through the darkness, as by the light of unearthly eyes, the soldiers pass from house to house, from hamlet to hamlet, rush, unbind their victims, lead them out, and shoot them dead. In Glenlyon's own quarters, nine men, including his own landlord, are bound and shot—one of them with General Hill's passport in his pocket! A lad of twenty had, in some strange fit of compassion, been spared by the soldiers, till a demon in soldier-shape, called Captain Drummond, came up, and ordered him instantly to be put to death. A boy of five is clinging to Glenlyon's knees, asking for mercy, and offering to be his servant for life, when Drummond (it was a deed worthy of Claverhouse) stabbed the child with his dirk, as he was in the act and agony of a prayer, by which even Campbell was moved.

Up the glen, a group of MacDonalds—some ten in number—are assembled on that cold morning around the fire of their hut. The men of the massacre, including one Barber, a sergeant, who, it seems, had been quartered in the house, fire in upon the party, and kill four of them. The owner of the house escaped unhurt, and expressed a desire to be put to death in the open air. "For your bread which I have ate," says Barber, "I will grant the request." He was taken out accordingly; but, while the soldiers

were presenting their muskets, he threw his plaid over their faces, broke away, and made his escape up the valley.

And now the blaze of burning cottages begins to illuminate that gloomy glen. The murderers, after massacreing the inmates, set their dwellings on fire. Many, however, taking the alarm, escape, half-naked, into the storm; and, through profound wreaths of snow, and over savage rocks and ravines, find their way to safety. Some, indeed, are lost in the drifts, others stumble over precipices to rise no more. But the snow avails to save more than it destroys. Duncanson, in his letter to Glenlyon, had promised to be at Glencoe at four in the morning. Had he fulfilled his promise, and been able then to occupy the eastern passes, he would have intercepted and destroyed all the fugitives. Owing to the storm, however, he did not arrive till eleven in the forenoon, and by this time there was not a MacDonald alive in the glen, save an old man of eighty. Him they slew. The rest of the cottages they burned to ashes. They then collected the property of the tribe, consisting of twelve hundred heads of cattle and horses, besides goats and sheep, and drove them off to the garrison of Fort William. In all thirty-eight were killed, and one hundred and fifty made their escape—having to flee more than twelve miles, through rocks and deserts, ere they reached a place of security. Such was the massacre of Glencoe!

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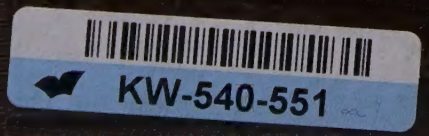
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